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Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4614th meeting

Monday, 23 September 2002, 4.35 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Tafrov	(Bulgaria)
Members:	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Traoré
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir. Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Letter dated 20 September 2002 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/1055)

Note verbale dated 20 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/1056)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

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The meeting resumed at 4.35 p.m.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Cyprus, Indonesia, Iraq, Mauritania, Morocco and Nepal, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Zackheos (Cyprus), Mr. Hidayat (Indonesia), Mr. Aldouri (Iraq), Mr. Ould Deddach (Mauritania), Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) and Mr. Sharma (Nepal) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 23 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2002/1060 and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that His Excellency Mr. Yahya Mahmassani, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, be allowed to participate, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter and rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, in the discussion of the item presently on its agenda."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of the League of the Arab States to the United Nations to participate in this meeting, in accordance with the rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 23 September 2002 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which reads as follows:

> "In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have the honour to request that I be invited to participate in the debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council."

On previous occasions, the Security Council has extended invitations to representatives of other United Nations bodies in connection with the consideration of matters on its agenda. In accordance with past practice regarding this matter, I propose that the Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Mr. Papa Louis Fall, to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 23 September 2002 from the Chairman of the African Group to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

> "In my capacity as Chairman of the African Group for the month of September, I have the honour to request authorization for Ambassador Amadou Kébé, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, to intervene in the debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, at the Security Council."

That letter will be published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2002/1059.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to Mr. Amadou Kébé.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Kébé to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Bahrain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): We congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. We are convinced that you will conduct the business of the Council in a wise manner. We also thank you for having convened this urgent meeting at the request of the Arab Group in order to discuss the deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

We have learned from the news that, as a result of the siege declared against certain Palestinian villages and towns and because of the curfew that has been imposed, Palestinian students are using underground corridors and storehouses for classrooms. Imagine what kind of lessons they receive under these conditions. We know that a healthy teaching environment means that there will be properly ventilated classrooms, with good natural or artificial light and proper teaching material. This means that even if the lessons are excellent, and however devoted the teacher is, the benefits derived from the lesson will be deficient if the setting is inappropriate.

If this siege goes on, Palestinian youth will develop hatred towards the perpetrators of a siege that they have known since their birth. This hatred could turn into violence, or could be the cause of violence. Furthermore, the Palestinians are witnessing something worse than the first situation. This is the treatment of their President, the symbol of their resistance to the Israeli occupation, around whom the noose is tightening every day, while his offices, where he resides, are being razed by bulldozers. One wing after another is being attacked, as water, electricity and all means of communication are cut off one by one.

Thus, these are two negative aspects of the problem, one pertaining to teaching, the other to politics and security. The two seriously threaten the collapse of the Palestinian Authority's control over its territories in the West Bank and Gaza. Given this situation, talks for a peaceful settlement become an absolute necessity, even if this settlement proves difficult at first. However, we need first to lift the state of siege, to be followed by the withdrawal of the Israeli security forces so that real peace negotiations get under way.

It seems that the current Israeli Government wants no peace. One thing proves this lack of motivation. The Israeli army was supposed to withdraw from Gaza at first, as was announced. However, the plan was not applied, despite the fact that violence had stopped for six weeks.

Numerous experiments have proved that peace comes only through negotiations. It cannot be imposed by force; otherwise it would be an unjust peace. Unfortunately, peace will be possible only if preceded by necessary preliminary steps, such as lifting the siege, withdrawing of the Israeli forces and ending the Israeli occupation. All of this seems out of our grasp right now because of Israeli intransigence.

Israel did not implement any of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations. This in defiance of the will of the international community, whose inability to act has led to Israeli imperialism over the Palestinian people. Israel believes that the use of its military force is part of a war against what is called terrorism, thus exploiting the world's struggle against this phenomenon since the events of 11 September 2001. However, there is a difference between resisting occupation and resisting terrorism.

The Arab countries together want to bring about a just and comprehensive peace in the region, based on international law. This is a strategic option. This policy was made clear in the Arab peace initiative adopted in the Beirut Summit in March of this year. The initiative received broad-based international support. It consists of having Israel withdraw from the occupied Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and giving the Palestinian refugees the right to return to their homeland in return for the recognition by the Arab countries of the State of Israel living in peace, side by side with an independent Palestinian State, within internationally recognized borders. However, thus far this initiative has not met a favourable response from Israel. Indeed, the events that the Palestinians are witnessing on the ground do not show any desire for peace on the part of Israel.

In conclusion, once again, we appeal to the Security Council, the guarantor of peace and security, to carry out the tasks entrusted to it, in order to ensure the implementation of its resolutions, at the forefront of which we find 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002). Furthermore, we urge the Council members to

vote in favour of the Arab draft resolution which is now before them.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Bahrain for his kind words addressed to me.

I now give the floor to Yahya Mahmassani, the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations.

Mr. Mahmassani (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assuming the presidency of the Council for this month. I am confident that you will conduct its proceedings with efficiency and wisdom. I take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador John Negroponte for ably steering the deliberations of the Council last month.

The Council meets today to deliberate on the development of the situation in Ramallah, in the aftermath of the Israeli aggression against President Yasser Arafat at his presidential compound, following a suicide operation inside Israel. The Israeli Government announces daily, whether through its Prime Minister or its public officials, that President Arafat is irrelevant and that the Palestinian Authority is without authority.

If that is the case for Israel, why are the Israeli forces laying siege to Arafat and punishing him by demolishing his presidential compound? The fact of the matter is that the policy of the Israeli Prime Minister has become irrelevant, and that its logic of force and violence over the logic of negotiations has failed. This policy brings killing and destruction to the Palestinian people without realizing peace and security for the Israeli people. The Israeli opinion polls prove this fact. General Amram Mitzna, the mayor of Haifa, expressed this in a statement he made a couple of days ago:

(*spoke in English*)

> "Mr. Sharon is leading Israel to disaster with a policy of force, more force and yet more force".

(*spoke in Arabic*)

After 50 years of war and violence, when will the Government of Israel be convinced that the policy of force and war will not settle the Middle East crisis and that negotiations and the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy are the only way for Israel, the State of Palestine and all the other countries of the region to live in peace, security and stability? Israel's violations of international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions have become commonplace, with the killing of women and children, the demolition of homes, expulsions and collective punishment continuing unabatedly as if they were of no concern to anyone. It may be necessary to cite some facts and figures to clarify the dimensions of the heinous Israeli occupation. The following figures might be relevant.

The number of Palestinian martyrs killed by occupation-force bullets between 28 September 2000 and 23 July 2002 was 1,705, in addition to the tens of thousands of people who have been wounded and disabled. The number of detainees held during the same period was 6,000, 1,700 of whom are under administrative detention, meaning that they have not been indicted. And the number of detained children, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is about 600. Scores of houses have been demolished. The total area bulldozed by the occupation authority in Gaza is equivalent to 10 per cent of all agricultural land.

Many new settlements have been established, including 40 since Sharon came to power. Council members recently heard a briefing by Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, about the humiliating situation in the occupied Arab territories.

The crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict is Israel's occupation of Arab territories and its refusal to withdraw to the 4 June 1967 line in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference. As long as the occupation continues, strife will continue, and so will resistance to occupation.

Here, we should be committed to preserving United Nations resolutions and the rules of international law, which make clear the legitimacy of resisting occupation within national borders. The Arab States have opted for peace as a strategic choice, and thus presented the Arab peace initiative at the Beirut Summit. Security Council members and all other States welcomed the Arab initiative, while Israel rejected it and chose the strategy of war.

We have questions for the Security Council. Why are there double standards? Why is Israel allowed to remain above international law and above the United Nations Charter? Why are Security Council resolutions

on Israel not enforced as they are for other countries? Israel has violated 28 of the Council's resolutions. Why does the Council not shoulder its responsibilities? And why does it not put an end to Israel's violations and its defiance of international law? Those questions beg for answers.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States for the kind words he addressed to the presidency.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am pleased, Sir, to see you presiding over the Council this month and would like to thank you for having convened this public meeting on the grave situation in the Palestinian territories.

While the broad repression of the Palestinians in the occupied territories has continued unabated, the recent onslaught by the Israelis against President Arafat's compound in Ramallah is deliberately designed to further deteriorate the situation. Flattening all the buildings in the compound with the sole exception of a wing of an office building, digging a deep trench, running coils of barbed wire and placing explosives, tanks and bulldozers around the main building attest to the expansionist designs of the Israelis.

The shooting and killing of several Palestinian demonstrators, the closure of the East Jerusalem offices of the president of Al-Quds University by the Israeli police, the tightening of curfews on several Palestinian towns and the raids carried out in Tulkarem and in several parts of the Gaza Strip are among other recent repressive measures that followed the raid on the compound.

By launching a new round of violence and by making an issue of the Palestinians in the compound, Mr. Sharon seeks to sabotage any effort to develop a road map for establishing a Palestinian State. In the past several weeks of relative calm in the occupied territories, the Israelis never stopped their campaign. They kept up their attacks, including the bombing of a Palestinian school. Tight closures and curfew regulations continued unabated. Settlement building activities went on ceaselessly. In other words, the Israelis were deliberately seeking to provoke a response, thereby to find yet another excuse to derail any effort that might one day lead to the restoration of Palestinian national rights.

Throughout the ongoing conflict, Mr. Sharon has demonstrated that he continues to have his longstanding agenda; he spares no effort and misses no opportunity to push ahead with it. That agenda seeks to squash the Palestinians and to conquer them completely. The basic strategy upon which the agenda is predicated is to make the Palestinians capitulate fully and to have them renounce their basic legitimate national rights. The ongoing siege of President Arafat's compound and what preceded it in the past several weeks confirm once again the view that he does not believe in a negotiated settlement. Nor did his predecessors really believe in the peace process, for they ceaselessly expanded settlement activity on the very lands from which they ostensibly negotiated the withdrawal.

In the midst of tragic events taking place in the course of this ongoing conflict, the international community must contemplate the reasons that prompt Palestinian teenagers and youngsters, who normally should see a bright future ahead, to sacrifice their lives. It should be borne in mind that the exceptional nature of the response demonstrates the exceptionally ruthless nature of the crimes committed against the Palestinian people over a very long period of time — crimes that by any measure are unprecedented even in comparison with similar instances in the colonial era.

Israel continues to flout all provisions of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, particularly those banning indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force and the humiliating treatment of civilian populations. It is also adamant in showing contempt for the recent resolutions of the Council, which stipulate its withdrawal from the re-occupied lands. We believe that the Security Council should not stand idly by and let its authority erode.

It is time for the Council to act more resolutely and demand full compliance with its resolutions. It is very unfortunate that those who sometimes stretch Council resolutions to advance their interests have no qualms about seeing the flouting of the letter and the spirit of clear-cut resolutions on the Palestinian question.

There is no doubt that selective enforcement of Security Council resolutions has an adverse impact on the authority of the Council and thereby undermines the overall international security system. It is also time for the Council to seriously consider the establishment of an international force to provide basic protection for defenceless Palestinian civilians.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Cuba. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are gratified, Sir, to see you presiding over the Security Council, and we wish you the greatest success.

For the third time in less than six months Israeli tanks and bulldozers have once again broken into the facilities of the Palestinian National Authority in Ramallah. This time, they have virtually destroyed everything, toppling buildings, cutting off water and electricity and keeping President Arafat and a group of his men under siege and in danger of losing their lives.

It is no secret to anyone that the Government of Israel's open defiance of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions the rules of international law is in good measure the result of the Security Council's passivity and failure to act. It is the result of the arbitrary use of the powers and prerogatives of a permanent member which, with its vetoes and threats of a veto has prevented the Security Council from fulfilling its mandate.

The world super-Power is determined to unleash a war against Iraq, whether by imposing it on the Security Council or acting unilaterally, as was reiterated by President Bush in Trenton, New Jersey, a few hours ago; it is preparing a dossier of that country's violations of Security Council resolutions, with which it seeks to attempt to justify its plans for military action.

Why does the United States not prepare a dossier of Israel's many flagrant violations of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions? Why does it act so different in one case than in the other? It would seem essential for the Security Council, in the days to come, to convene a debate like this one on the question of Iraq and to cease its usual secret gatherings on a topic that is on the front pages of every newspaper.

If the United States is truly worried about the supposed presence of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, why does it not demand of Israel that it immediately destroy those it possesses? Now they are attempting to explain that the credibility of the United Nations is at stake if the Organization does not support the new doctrine of preventive war. But by what moral right does a country speak of credibility when that country, using the anachronistic, undemocratic privilege of the veto has, for many years — 25 times — prevented this body from fulfilling its mandate on the question of Palestine? When they do not veto, they only permit the adoption of timid resolutions that say little and are implemented even less.

In Conference Room 4 of this building, the International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People is taking place, bringing together 159 non-governmental organizations and 26 experts from all the world, including Israel. They have not shown special interest in what is happening here. They know that nothing will be done and that the Security Council will not listen to them. There, the Security Council simply lacks credibility.

In the meantime, the Palestinian people continue to be completely unprotected. This organ has not even been able to seriously consider the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a multinational force in the occupied territories. We reiterate that the United States must immediately suspend its financial support for military purposes and its military supplies for Israel, including tanks, helicopters, missiles and aircraft that are being used against civilians.

State terrorism unleashed by Israel must come to an end. The flagrant, systematic and massive violation of the human rights, including the right to life, of the Palestinian people, must be halted. The repression, torture and demolition of homes must come to and end. The illegal occupation of Palestinian territory must end.

Innocent Israeli civilians are also unfortunate victims of the spiral of violence and terror unleashed by the policies of their Government. We demand that the Government of Israel withdraw its troops immediately from the facilities of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah and that it immediately cease

the encirclement of President Arafat and his men. We demand also a halt to the repression of the Palestinian population, which has come out in the streets in several cities to protest these new actions of the Israeli Government.

Cuba will not waiver in denouncing the crimes committed against the Arab peoples, in particular the Palestinian people.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Cuba for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Malaysia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): Allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month and to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Negroponte of the United States, for his stewardship of the Council last month.

My delegation wishes to thank you and Council members for convening this urgent meeting of the Council to consider the grave situation in Palestine. We thank Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process for his extremely useful briefing on the situation, given in this Chamber last Friday.

We are equally grateful to the Secretary-General for his important statement to the Council this morning. We hope that his thoughtful words will not have fallen on deaf ears.

We are dismayed that after some six weeks of relative calm, violence has erupted again, resulting in the taking of innocent lives. Malaysia condemns these acts of violence and deeply regrets the loss of innocent lives on both sides of the conflict. Such actions serve no purpose other than inflaming an already volatile situation. In the current situation in Palestine and the precarious and potentially explosive situation in the Middle East, amidst the rumbling of a possible war in the region, every effort should be made by all the parties concerned towards de-escalating tension and restarting dialogue and negotiation.

My delegation strongly condemns the brutal military assault and siege on the headquarters of President Yasser Arafat in Ramallah. Those actions are completely uncalled for. They have placed President Arafat in serious danger and have further undermined his reform efforts. It is disingenuous on the part of Israel to blame President Arafat for the suicide bombings and activities of Palestinian militancy when for many months now the Israel Defence Forces have held sway in the occupied territories, with President Arafat a virtual prisoner and with his every act and movement closely monitored. It is also unfair to make Mr. Arafat accountable for every suicide bombing that occurs, as if he controlled the bombers' every action and intention.

While it is convenient for those who dislike Mr. Arafat to blame him, it is obvious that he cannot be an effective leader when his ability to exercise power and authority is being systematically undermined, eroded and shackled by Israeli operations and restrictions. President Arafat himself has repeatedly condemned attacks against Israeli civilians and has declared such attacks as harmful to the Palestinian cause. Clearly, those actions against President Arafat are intended to harass and intimidate him into submission and to destroy the symbol and hope of the Palestinian people that he represents to his people and the entire international community. Israel cannot hope to break the indomitable spirit of the Palestinian people and their leadership, as represented by President Arafat, their democratically elected leader. If Israel sincerely seeks peace with the Palestinians, it must abandon those tactics of terror in favour of constructive dialogue and engagement with them. Israel's tactics make a mockery of Mr. Sharon's claim to be a "man of peace".

Violence does not happen in a vacuum. It must be seen and understood in its proper context. In the context of Palestine, it is the continued occupation of Palestinian land by the Israeli occupying forces, the demolition of Palestinians' homes, the devastation of their towns and cities, the destruction of their livelihood and institutions, the frequent and prolonged curfews and, worst of all, the loss of thousands of civilian lives through the ruthless and indiscriminate use of force by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF). The continued terrorizing of the Palestinian people by the IDF — such as firing into a crowd of school children in the Amari refugee camp last week, which resulted in the killing of a nine-year-old boy — will only provoke violence rather than quell it. Clearly, terror begets terror and the spiral of violence will continue unabated

unless serious efforts are made to stop this deadly pattern of tit-for-tat retaliation.

The recent spate of violence is a wake-up call to the international community, particularly those entrusted with special responsibility to restart the peace process. Events of recent days remind us that, notwithstanding our preoccupation with other equally important concerns elsewhere, the long-standing and unresolved issue of Palestine demands our immediate and undivided attention.

My delegation believes that as long as this issue is unresolved it will remain the root cause of much of the violence in the Middle East. The international community and the United Nations cannot afford to allow this issue to remain unresolved indefinitely. As the Secretary-General himself has pointed out, the increase in tension in the Middle East, due to the issue of Iraq, increases the need for and the importance of rapid positive movement on the Israeli-Palestinian track.

As was pointed out by Mr. Roed-Larsen in his briefing last Friday, the six weeks prior to the most recent suicide bombings had been notably quiet on the Palestinian side, despite many actions taken against the Palestinians. IDF operations continued, however, including widespread arrests and assassinations, as well as a tightened closure regime and curfews. Those deliberate and provocative acts by Israel at a time of internal debate among the Palestinians on the utility of violence in their struggle and amid serious efforts to implement a security agreement, reflect Israel's complete lack of interest in and disdain for resolving the conflict through dialogue and negotiations. It is most regrettable that the serious efforts of the Palestinians to restore calm and security have not received a positive response from the Israeli side; instead, they are being rebuffed and undermined at every turn.

We must not to allow the issue of Iraq, which is currently high on the Council's agenda, to be used as a pretext or excuse by Israel to intensify its practice of State terrorism against the Palestinian people. The renewed violence convinces us more than ever before that only an interposing international protection mechanism can monitor the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, as well as provide much-needed protection to the Palestinian people. We fully support the Secretary-General's recommendation for the deployment of an international protection force, which Malaysia itself had advocated during its membership of the Council two years ago. Only forcible separation of the two peoples by a strong United Nations force could provide the necessary peace and security that would allow both parties to resume negotiations. We remain convinced that if this had been done, much of the current violence could have been avoided.

We remain concerned over the dire and deteriorating humanitarian situation on the ground. We have been forewarned that the crisis might spiral out of control within months, with 50 per cent of the population dependant on food handouts and with malnutrition and water-borne diseases spreading. The economic situation has also worsened. Ironically, despite its outward expression of concern at the Palestinian plight, which is its own doing, Israel has not seriously undertaken any effort to improve or assist in alleviating the humanitarian crisis. My delegation condemns the restrictive measures by Israel that have aggravated the situation of the already overwrought population living in the occupied Palestinian territories. We welcome the efforts of the Quartet and other countries, as well as international agencies, in addressing the humanitarian situation.

We believe an independent Palestinian State is inevitable, and we look forward to its realization within the targeted three-year period, at the very latest. In that regard, we welcome the Quartet's three-phase plan of action, or road map, for achieving a two-State solution. We also welcome its plan to establish a third-party mechanism to monitor and assess progress on forward movement in the implementation of the road map. We hope that the assessment will be fair and impartial. The onus of achieving the targets of the road map must also be equal on both sides.

Malaysia's position on the question of Palestine has often been repeated in the Council. We believe the solution lies in the realization of the vision contained in Security Council resolution 1397 (2002), in which two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders. Malaysia reiterates its support for the Arab peace initiative and the important efforts of the Quartet as well as other interested parties and looks forward to the implementation of initiatives to resume the peace process.

My delegation would once again urge the Council to take a more active role in efforts to find a permanent settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, based on the relevant resolutions of the Council, in the interest of peace and stability in the region and of enhancing its own credibility. Much is said these days about the need for the United Nations, in particular the Council, to enhance its credibility by following up on its resolutions. We fully agree with that. The onus is on each and every member of the Council. However, in implementing its resolutions, the Council must ensure consistency and even-handedness in respect of all its resolutions, including those pertaining to the question of Palestine, which have been ignored by Israel with impunity. A selective approach by the Council will only undermine its credibility.

My delegation looks forward to the Council enhancing its credibility, beginning by meeting its responsibility with regard to the Palestinian issue. A real beginning in that direction would be for the Council to support the draft resolution before it. Failure to do so would ensure not enhanced credibility, which we all seek, but the Council's continued ineffectiveness on this issue.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Malaysia for the kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Denmark. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries of the European Economic Area Iceland and Liechtenstein align themselves with this statement.

Until a few days ago, six weeks had gone by without Israeli civilian casualties inside Green Line Israel. This period of calm was shattered by renewed acts of terror. The European Union condemns unreservedly the suicide bombing attacks in Umm el-Fahm and Tel Aviv, in which six Israelis were killed and many more injured.

Likewise, our hearts go out to the Palestinian children — and to their parents — who suffered a bomb attack in the schoolyard of Zeif Yatta elementary school in Hebron. Deliberately targeting children in their schools is a particularly odious act.

The European Union deplores the fact that civilians on both sides continue to suffer from violence: horror and terror for ordinary people in the streets of Israel, and the brutality of occupation for the ordinary people in the Palestinian territories.

The European Union is deeply concerned by the deployment of Israeli tanks in Ramallah and in the north of the Gaza Strip, and by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) shelling and destruction of Chairman Arafat's headquarters. Restricting the freedom of movement of the Palestinian leadership does not contribute to fighting terror, to Israel's legitimate security concerns, or to the necessary process of Palestinian reforms supported by the international community, including, not least, the Quartet. Israel must stop the occupation of Chairman Arafat's headquarters, and Chairman Arafat must do his utmost to stop the terror.

These events take place at a time when there had been some hope that resumed contacts between the parties could restart the political process. The European Union strongly calls on both sides to show their commitment to peace by acting with maximum restraint. Force cannot defeat force.

The European Union has therefore welcomed the promise by Fatah that it will prevent any attacks against Israeli civilians and the fact that it has called on other Palestinian groups to do likewise. We strongly reiterate that call. The terrorists must not be allowed to derail the aspirations of the many who support peace in the Middle East.

The European Union recalls the recent statement by the Middle East Quartet, at its meeting on 17 September in New York, in which the violence and terror in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was deplored and condemned, and in which the expectations of the international community with respect to the return to the path of peace in the conflict were laid out.

The European Union once again confirms its strong will to stand by those who seek permanent peace and security. We will continue to work relentlessly with

the regional parties and within the Middle East Quartet towards that goal.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Tunisia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): We are profoundly disquieted and concerned to see Israel using provocation and military escalation while many peace-loving international parties are trying to rebuild following the serious damage inflicted on many Palestinian reoccupied towns by the Israeli military action.

This is a clear attempt to demolish what remains of the infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority and its institutions and clear evidence of Israel's insistence on committing further crimes against the defenceless Palestinian people. It is clear that Israel is stubbornly and intransigently persisting in impeding peace efforts intended to defuse tension and to create conditions conducive to a resumption of the political dialogue and to a return to negotiations.

Notwithstanding all of the efforts made by the Palestinian side to show good faith and good intentions and to reform its institutions in keeping with the vision and the requirements of influential international parties, and despite the calm we had seen in the past six weeks, Israel has continued to perpetrate barbaric military actions against innocent Palestinian civilians.

Israel has not stopped its harassment of the legitimate President of Palestine, President Arafat. It has imposed a humiliating state of siege on him and has destroyed his headquarters. The Israeli Government has turned its back on all peace initiatives, including the Arab peace initiative that was adopted and endorsed at the Beirut Summit, whereas the Palestinian and all Arab countries remain committed to peace as a strategic choice.

Tunisia condemns Israel's persistence in imposing a state of siege on the legitimate President of Palestine, President Arafat. It condemns Israel's continued implementation of a calculated and systematic policy against defenceless Palestinian civilians in order to starve them and to oust them from their lands, in flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and of relevant international instruments, mores and ethics.

We condemn this persistence and call on the international community to urge Israel immediately to comply in full and without conditions with Security Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002); immediately to withdraw from all reoccupied Palestinian towns; to return to the status quo of before 20 September 2000; and to put an end to its futile policy, which is fed by a short-term political vision that merely broadens the scope of the violence and fuels resentment and a thirst for vengeance.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution will be impossible as long as the security imperative continues to be considered paramount. We need to work in parallel in all other areas, including the political and economic fields, so as to deal immediately with the humanitarian situation, which continues to deteriorate in the Palestinian towns and villages that have been reoccupied, in order thus to give rise to some hope and to avoid a deadlock.

The brutality and daily acts of aggression suffered by Palestinian civilians at the hands of the Israeli occupying forces impel us today to reaffirm the proposal made at the Cairo Summit by President Ben Ali of Tunisia to establish a mechanism to protect the Palestinian people from Israeli practices and violations.

We are profoundly convinced that the delicate international situation today requires the international community to step up its efforts to facilitate a return by both parties to the negotiating table in order to enshrine the vision of two States, Palestine and Israel, living side by side within secure and recognized borders. The international community should also redouble its efforts to make Israel withdraw from the occupied Arab territories, to observe international law in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and to base its actions on the Madrid terms of reference and the principle of land for peace.

(spoke in French)

In calling for this meeting of the Security Council, the Arab Group wanted the international community to be seized of the inadmissible behaviour of the State and the army of Israel. A legitimate complaint by the Palestinian Authority has been placed before the Council and it calls for the *minimum minimorum*. That entails an immediate halt to the punitive operations organized by a Member of the

United Nations in disregard of the Charter itself; respect for the symbol of the Palestinian national struggle — President Arafat, whose life is being threatened; withdrawal by the occupying forces to the positions held prior to September 2000; and accelerated peace efforts by all international actors. None of that is cause for reservations. As we have in recent times constantly referred to the need for unity in the Council, let us demonstrate the solidarity of the international community even if we know that, unfortunately, Israel will ignore this admonition with total impunity.

What disgusts the Arab world, and indeed the Muslim world, is the policy of double standards to which it is subjected daily. All peoples of common sense in the world have strongly condemned the crimes of 11 September 2001. But when it comes to the ills that beset our region, people are silent. This is what Robert Fisk wrote in *The Independent* on 11 September 2002:

(spoke in English)

> "Today, 11 September, our newspapers and our television screens are filled with the baleful images of those two towers and their biblical descent. We will remember and honour the thousands who died. But in just five days' time, Palestinians will remember their September massacre of 1982. Will a single candle be lit for them in the West? Will there be a single memorial service? Will a single ... newspaper dare to recall this atrocity? Will a single ... newspaper commemorate the twentieth anniversary of these mass killings of 1,700 innocents? Do I even need to give the answer?"

(spoke in French)

Rest assured that we are realistic people and that we know that it is pointless to seek condemnation of Israel by the Security Council. The draft resolution before the Council expresses the hope that the Council will request Israel to behave like a civilized country. Its people are intelligent enough to understand that their soldiers and their Prime Minister have gone too far and that that is not in the interests of a country that will one day have to live in peace and harmony with its Arab neighbours. The Arab Summit held in Beirut made Israel a historic offer. Tel Aviv should seize that opportunity, sooner rather than later, to finally resolve the painful Israeli-Arab conflict.

As far as the members of the Security Council are concerned, their adoption of this draft resolution today would mean that they were helping both parties in a decisive manner. Indeed, the necessary conditions must be created for a resumption of peace talks. In that context, the situation of President Arafat must be resolved as a matter of urgency. His freedom of movement and action must be restored to him.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dorda (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): As this is the first time this month that I take the floor in the Security Council, allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. I would also like to thank you for convening this open meeting so that the Council may discharge its responsibilities in full view of the representatives of the international community, on whose behalf it carries out its work.

With regard to the subject under consideration, I shall be very brief in describing the situation so that we can recall the true nature of the issue.

As members are well aware, Palestine was occupied during the period of the British Mandate. The year 1947 witnessed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II), on the partition of Palestine. In 1948, the occupying Power established its State in Palestine with invaders who came from all over the world. They were people who were not born there and who can never claim that the land was theirs at any time in history.

Since then, the Zionist objective remained secure and recognized borders. Since then, the declared Arab objective has been the liberation of Palestine — until the catastrophe of 1967. The Israeli objective never changed, while the Arab objective receded shamefully. The goal of the liberation of Palestine was replaced with that of the elimination of the consequences of the aggression of 1967. Then came the 1973 war, which achieved some military victories, but which brought political defeat to the Arabs. Unfortunately, the Arabs accepted this.

Let us consider the Israeli objectives. What is the Zionist concept of Israeli security? As the Council and the whole world can see, it is not the kind of security

that is achieved through documents, conventions, agreements or demilitarized areas. Nor can it be achieved by a multinational force to separate the two warring parties. The Zionist concept of security requires the complete alteration of the military, economic, political, cultural and psychological character of the whole Arab region, creating a situation that would make it impossible for Arabs to assert their historical rights to their land. That has actually been achieved in the case of some Arabs.

What happened in return? The Arabs took further steps towards what was called peace. They agreed to join what was called the peace process. They attended the regional and international conferences of that process. Then they discovered that what was required of them was capitulation — and the declaration of capitulation — not the achievement of peace.

Our Palestinian brothers have suffered greatly. They thought that they, too, could take that route in order to recover a part of their land. What did they obtain? They accepted Oslo, Madrid, Wye Plantation, Camp David and Sharm el-Sheikh: they accepted everything to which they were invited and which they were asked to sign.

What happened, and why did it happen? Some Arabs offered peace initiatives, from Fez to Beirut. What did they receive in return? All the initiatives proposed by the Arabs were rejected. They received nothing in return for all their concessions. All the concessions made by our brothers in Palestine received a negative response. That proves a very important point: the occupying authorities in Palestine do not seek peace; nor do they desire it. They do not even need peace. They seek only destruction and are sabotaging any initiative that aims at making peace in the region.

This is not a figment of my imagination. I am citing Uri Avneri, who, by the way, is not Libyan. He has said that the goal of the occupying authorities in Palestine is simply the destruction of any peace initiative. He said this in his recent article entitled, "How to Torpedo the Saudis". He was referring to the initiative of Prince Abdullah, which was endorsed by the Beirut Summit. We know very well what the Zionist terrorist army did to the Palestinians immediately following that initiative's endorsement at Beirut.

That puts a direct responsibility on the Council. Most unfortunately and regrettably, it condemns the Council. This Council is called the Security Council. Council members have seen what has happened to international peace and security in the region and because of the region. The Council knows everything that has happened, and it has been unable to adopt any resolution. That means that the Council is not free and is not the master of its own affairs. It is not even international: it does not truly serve the cause of international peace and security. That is a fact recognized by all Council members even if they do not admit it. Where is the democracy in the work of the Council? Where is the transparency in the work of the Council? This is the Council's responsibility. If the Council is unable to discharge its responsibility, every people under occupation must have the right to self-defence. That is a historical and God-given right. They must be able to resist those who occupy their land, detain their people, imprison them, send some to meet their maker, send others into exile and destroy homes with their residents inside.

How can we allow those who defend their lands against occupiers to be branded as terrorists? This is warped logic. The terrorist is the one who comes to occupy, to kill, to exile, to imprison and to destroy. That is the real terrorist. Those who have the right to respond in defence of their honour, dignity and land are the occupied, not the occupier.

Do Council members imagine that, in the face of the arrogance of power, we have forgotten the meaning of words and their true weight? Some Arabs are so afraid of death that they have died of fear; they died of their fear to say a single word in self-expression. Since they are dead nevertheless, they might as well speak out.

All of the countries of the world that have suffered colonialism know the meaning of occupation and the importance of martyrdom and self-defence, dignity and freedom. The Palestinians are free to defend themselves. They are not terrorists. The terrorists are those who persist in occupying their lands.

It is now the Council's turn to act. If it is unable to discharge its Charter duties and responsibilities, then at least once it should boldly condemn the aggressor and occupier. We know that the events in Palestine are part and parcel of all the schemes and plans being

prepared for the region as a whole. We are fully aware that all Arabs will be standing in line to be punished one after the other if they do not come to see, before it is too late, that they are all targeted. We believe that they have all now understood and recognized that they are all targets.

I affirm here that it is not always the rulers who make the decisions. There comes a time when the decisions are made by the people. If the masses have been seduced by the illusions of peace and the peace process, we can thank the Zionists for having interrupted that seduction with everything they have done and continue to do. If that should occur, however, the Security Council will have nothing to do.

An Arab poet once said that what is justly ruined can be justly rebuilt. We are awaiting justice and it will not be long in coming. It will not be the Palestinians alone who choose to die — they are already dead anyway. All the inhabitants of the region will become bombs that cannot be stopped so long as their rulers are not up to making the difficult decisions needed to deter aggression, restore dignity and liberate their usurped lands. That day is inexorably coming. I say this not in the interest of endorsing a resolution, but in order to record it for history.

Those who are rising in Palestine are Palestinians. They were not imported. That is an irrefutable sociological fact. The Council has been trivialized by the Zionist authorities, just as they trivialized the entire United Nations when they prevented a Council mission from going to Jenin to discharge its responsibility. What did the Security Council do then? Nothing! It had no reaction. If such an action were taken by an Arab country, the Council would have imposed sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter. The Zionist authorities have continuously trivialized the Council by failing to comply with any of its resolutions. What is the Council going to do? Arafat and the Palestinians are always the ones who are wronged.

The calculations of history always prevail over those of power and might. Any study of history reveals empires that have risen and subsequently collapsed and disappeared. That is what will happen to those who believe that they can impose their will and ideas on entire peoples, who are created in God's image. When the Libyan people faced Italy, it was the very first occasion on which the aeroplane, a great innovation at that time, was used for military purposes. We resisted, however; we resisted the latest technology of that time with our bare hands and any tools that were available. We lost precisely half the population of our country, but we achieved our freedom, as many others have done. This will happen in Palestine, too. I place these words on record here in the Council so that any future scholar, in considering the Council's activities on this humanitarian question, will find at least one voice that spoke the truth without seeking to conceal it.

When the Council was requested to send observers — mere observers — it failed to do so. It is high time for this Council to recover its prestige and a certain degree of credibility, if it cannot recover it all. I insist on this because we respect this Council and the United Nations. We want to respect international legality, too, but what international legality is there when the United Nations is weak? We want a strong United Nations that stands firm, in accordance with its Charter and the rules of international law — the power of the law, not the law of power.

The Council should reach its decisions through direct dialogue, just as I am speaking here. Decisions should not come in envelopes from capitals under economic and political pressure from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the other international financial institutions, as well as military pressure and threats.

Such resolutions cannot express the will of the international community, on whose behalf we are working. We are making these comments so as to ensure that they will be on record for the benefit of all those who take a keen interest in ensuring that the United Nations and the Security Council are strong — something that we should all support.

I pray to God that representatives will have the courage to tell the truth to their capitals so that one day we will be able to create a strong Security Council and a strong United Nations that will be our refuge against the arrogance of power.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Khalid (Pakistan): I should like at the outset to compliment you, Mr. President, on having convened

this important meeting today. I am speaking on behalf of my Permanent Representative who, unfortunately, could not be here today.

September 2002 marks the second anniversary of violence in Palestine — violence triggered by enormous provocation at the Al Aqsa Mosque in 2000. The past two years have witnessed the loss of innocent lives and indiscriminate violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people. The latest in a long series of unabated provocations is the demolition of the Ramallah compound that housed important symbols and elements of the anticipated Palestinian State. It is regrettable that that attack was carried out at a time when the Middle East Quartet had just declared its agreement on a three-phase plan of action for achieving a two-State solution within three years. The Israeli assault — the third since March 2002 — and the decision to completely isolate President Arafat constitute a blatant violation of all norms of international law and further aggravates the tense situation.

Attacks, occupation, re-occupation, humiliation, human rights abuses and the consequent decline in Palestinian living conditions have further darkened the prospects for peace in the Holy Land. The genuine endeavours of the Palestinian people to introduce reforms and political stability in the occupied territories have been met with unabated curfews and closures, which have further exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in the occupied territories. Ms. Catherine Bertini, the Personal Humanitarian Envoy of the Secretary-General, has reported that the crisis might spiral out of control within months, as about 50 per cent of the Palestinian population is unemployed, while malnutrition and disease are spreading.

Such a situation is likely to cast a dark shadow on international efforts, including those of the Middle East Quartet, to bring peace and security to the Middle East. The occupation forces, it appears, want to submerge even the traces of the derailed peace process in the dust of demolished Palestinian settlements.

Peace is not just the absence of war at the expense of the inalienable rights of the weak. Real and durable peace flows from a state in which people see preserved their fundamental rights, based on justice and equity, and are assured a secure economic and political future. Unfortunately, by failing adequately to address the root cause of the Palestinian problem — that is, the preservation and realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people — peace in the Middle East has been held hostage to an uneasy situation that even a mild trigger could cause to erupt.

The Security Council must be able to ensure an immediate end to the siege of President Arafat's headquarters; the non-negotiability of the fundamental rights of the occupied people, including their right to self-determination; respect for and urgent implementation of Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002); a permanent end to the provocative construction of illegal settlements in the Palestinian territories; and the establishment of a mechanism to assign responsibility for the violation of humanitarian law by the occupation forces.

In Palestine as elsewhere, the resolutions of the Security Council must be implemented. Time has come for this Council to reaffirm the Charter obligations of all Member States and ensure the implementation of its own resolutions with out further delay or discrimination.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Pakistan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Sudan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) *(spoke in Arabic)*: I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I would also like to pay tribute to Mr. Negroponte, who presided over the Council's activities during the month of August.

The Council is meeting once again to discuss Israel's contempt for international law. It is truly regrettable that this may not be the last such meeting. With complete impunity, Israel, the usurping occupying force, has persisted in its criminal, brutal acts. Defiance and contempt have become the official policy of the Sharon Government. You, Sir, may recall that this Council has met more than once in the past year as a result of acts such as those that Israel is committing today. The deplorable repetition of this pattern leads us to question the real role of the Security Council, which is supposed to seek to ensure international peace and security.

Does the Council not believe that the continued acts against the Muqata'a in Ramallah threaten international peace and security? Do Council members not believe that something should be done to put an end to continued Israeli aggression and arrogance? Does not the Charter of the United Nations, in particular its Articles 34 and 36, require the Council to adopt adequate measures in such situations? What does the Council expect, now that Israel has tightened its grip on the official headquarters of the Palestinian National Authority, cutting off water, electricity and telephone service from the building? Does the Council not believe that such Israeli actions are serious enough to warrant taking action to put an end to them? And how can we explain the dubious silence about what is happening? Does it reflect a kind of complacency towards the usurper and occupier, or is it an admission of the Council's inability to shoulder its responsibilities under the Charter?

Israel is not only attacking the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority; it is also deliberately and systematically committing aggression against the provisions of the Charter and violating Council resolutions that it does not respect. Israel is confident that the Council will not find ways to enforce those resolutions. The occupying force's belief that it is above the law and the assurances it receives that it will always get the protection it needs prompt Israel to fine-tune its efforts to invent new kinds of violations daily.

Empty expressions of compassion will not go far under such circumstances. The Security Council should shoulder its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It should take measures to deter Israel, the occupying force, from continuing on the path of violence, injustice and terror, for which all that State's capacities are harnessed. Forcing Israel to withdraw immediately and unconditionally from all Palestinian cities is a step — albeit a first small step — on the road that the Council should take with a view to achieving a just and peaceful settlement of the Middle East crisis. The Council should hasten to adopt the resolution introduced by the Arab Group. That is the least it can do to preserve its authority.

The President: I thank the representative of Sudan for the kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nambiar (India): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council during a month charged with a full agenda, coinciding, as it does, with the General Assembly and with the first anniversary of the 11 September attacks. We thank you for convening this emergency open meeting of the Council on the serious situation in the Middle East, which allows us to take stock of the recent developments.

Although in the month leading up to 17 September, 56 Palestinians and five Israelis lost their lives, the six weeks from 4 August to 18 September were unique in that they represented the longest period without a suicide bombing or major Israeli military activity since September 2000. Six weeks of relative quiet in the Middle East gave rise to hopes for the possibility of progress in addressing the conflict raging in the region. The decision of the Quartet, in its meeting of 17 September, to come up with a three-phase road map for achieving a two-State solution within three years, as well as the Quartet's meetings with the Foreign Ministers of countries in the region, were positive signs. Unfortunately, recent developments, including the two suicide attacks inside Israel, the bomb blast in a Palestinian school and subsequent Israeli action in Ramallah, have worked to negate all efforts towards reconciliation.

The reoccupation of the headquarters of the President of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah on 19 September and the wanton destruction of property around the President's headquarters by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) serve no constructive purpose. Israeli forces have also reacted strongly to spontaneous Palestinian protests against Israeli actions in President Arafat's compound, leading to the deaths of more Palestinians and injuries to several others. The incursions of the IDF into Palestinian-controlled areas of Gaza and the reimposition of curfews and closures in all Palestinian cities, with the exception of Bethlehem, have taken the region back to the situation of six weeks ago and have set back the political process.

My Government strongly deplores Israeli retaliatory measures against President Arafat and believes them to be counterproductive. We believe that, far from contributing to Israel's security, they can only jeopardize efforts towards peace. President Arafat remains the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and any attack against him would seriously

undermine ongoing efforts to find a solution to the conflict. We call upon the Israeli Government to completely withdraw its forces from President Arafat's compound forthwith and to work with the Palestinian Authority in de-escalating the situation.

The extent of the continuing humanitarian crisis in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has been highlighted by the Secretary-General's Personal Humanitarian Envoy, Catherine Bertini, who visited the region last August and, more recently, by the release of the report of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator (UNSCO) for the Middle East peace process on the impact of closure and other mobility restrictions on Palestinian productive activities. The UNSCO report shows that the Palestinian economy is in a severe depression, with only international aid stemming a possible total breakdown. According to the report, unemployment in the occupied territories is around 50 per cent and poverty levels have reached 70 per cent in Gaza and 55 per cent in the West Bank, while income losses are estimated at $7.6 million a day, with a total loss of $3.3 billion since October 2000. The Secretary-General has reported that, despite high-level Israeli assurances of increased cooperation with the aid agencies, there have been only marginal improvements on the ground.

We urge the Government of Israel to do all that is possible to alleviate the social and economic plight of the Palestinian population by lifting closures and blockades, by allowing unhindered access to humanitarian supplies and by releasing the balance of funds due to the Palestinian Authority.

The resurgence of violence threatens to derail efforts towards peace, as do the military measures of the IDF. The resumption of suicide bombings by militant groups are an act of random violence designed to torpedo the progress by the parties concerned towards arriving at conciliatory measures. We condemn the suicide bombings and the violence against innocent civilians. It is our belief that no situation, however difficult, can justify acts of violence against innocent civilians, be they Israelis or Palestinians or any other people of the Earth on which we cohabit.

Another crossroad has been reached, requiring another debate in the Security Council on the Bengalese issue. The answer lies in all concerned persevering in their efforts towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict, and in not allowing vested interests to derail a process designed to bring peace, security and economic well-being to an entire generation of people in the region.

India joins the rest of the international community in calling for continued forward movement in realizing the vision of two States, living side by side within secure and recognized boundaries, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002).

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of India for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Saudi Arabia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to wish you every success. My thanks go also to your predecessor, Ambassador John Negroponte, for his work as President of the Council last month.

I thank you, Sir, for convening this emergency meeting to consider the latest developments in the occupied Palestinian territories.

It is quite clear to the international community that the dangerous escalation in the occupied Palestinian territories has continued since the provocative visit by the present Prime Minister of Israel to the Al-Aqsa mosque, accompanied by a large contingent of soldiers, in clear defiance of Arab and Islamic feelings. That ominous visit was the spark that ignited the Palestinian intifada, which is an expression of the Palestinian people's rejection of having its holy sites desecrated.

Since the present Israeli Government came to power, it has accelerated its plan to sabotage any attempt to resume the peace talks and to reach a peaceful settlement that would restore peace and security while providing a just and permanent solution to the problem. It has imposed a suffocating economic siege; restricted the movement of the Palestinians; destroyed houses and institutions; demolished the Palestinian economic infrastructure; destroyed farms; bulldozed fields; uprooted trees; killed children, elderly people, the disabled and women; continued to liquidate political activists and Palestinian leaders; closed

crossing points and international borders; and continued to expand Israeli settlements, while violating the human rights of the Palestinian people and breaching international humanitarian law. As a result, violence has escalated. And each violent act led to another. Much bloodshed and killing ensued.

The Israeli Government has insisted on using excessive force with its entire military arsenal, as a means of killing and destruction. It has adopted this as a method of governing that falls within a systematic policy of targeting the Palestinian people and their leadership. The most recent instance of this is the siege of the headquarters of the Palestinian president, and the threat to bomb the headquarters with all those who are in it to force them to submit to Israeli demands and surrender.

The Israeli security forces continue to interfere in the affairs of the Palestinian Authority, while the Israeli army continues to kill or displace civilians and demolish their houses. Intelligence units have continued their arrests and assassinations pursuant to what the Israeli Chief of Staff has said: that its country aims to abolish what he called the Palestinian cancer and bring about the moral and military defeat of the Palestinians, in order to abolish their rights. All of this has occurred before the eyes of the international community, which has seen all forms of Palestinian struggle as a form of terrorism while seeing Israeli terrorism as legitimate self-defence, contrary to all human ethical values.

The Security Council has a responsibility to face injustice, denial of rights and threats to international peace and security stemming from Israeli practices, which provoke Palestinians and continue to suppress and terrorize them, putting an end to their aspirations. They find nothing before them in terms of dignity, justice and the restoration of their usurped rights, except to use violent acts, which leads in turn to Israeli terrorism.

The international community cannot stand by in the face of the deteriorating situation without doing anything. We should force Israel to stop its practices and its attacks, to submit to the requirements of international humanitarian law, to provide the necessary protection for innocent civilians, and to implement the Fourth Geneva Convention, of 1949.

The siege of President Arafat's headquarters should end, and Israeli forces should withdraw from Palestinian cities to their positions before September 2000. The intervention of the Security Council is no longer for protection, but to put an end to the killing of a whole people and to save it from being expelled from its homeland, along with restoring its usurped rights and putting an end to its humiliation. There is a dire need for intervention by the international community to help both parties to control the worsening situation and to put an end to this spiral of violence and destruction.

The continuing spiral of violence in the occupied Palestinian territories will not be halted unless the Palestinian people regain their legitimate rights, which are endorsed by the entire international community and ratified by international law, and which have become a legal matter pursuant to the agreements made by various Israeli Governments with the Palestinian party.

Concentrating on the security side only has become an obstruction, and not a bridge, to the resumption of political negotiations. It has shown the impotence and futility of Israeli policy, while the Israeli Government's attempt to dictate its conditions and impose its will has led to more bloodshed and more innocent victims.

The fact that the Israeli political discourse is not serious or logical is reflected in its focus on blaming only the Palestinian Authority on security matters. This is at a time when the Israeli occupation forces have undermined the Authority and deprived it of the means to act. Blaming only the Palestinians for security, and making it responsible for the violence and insecurity, is not realistic and does not help to solve the problem. Security must be garnered through mutual commitments and responsibilities.

Security is a comprehensive and integral concept. Being committed to it is the responsibility of all parties. However, that commitment loses its credibility when some are exempt from fulfilling it.

Therefore, we cannot accept the fact that Israel has an exceptional status in the international community, protecting itself under the pretext of security, thus allowing it to transcend international legitimacy and use the policy of force and that of faits accomplis.

Breaking out of the spiral of violence in the region has become an international responsibility, one requiring finding a political settlement based on international legitimacy and leading to Israel's

withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied since 1967 and to the establishment of a Palestinian State with Eastern Jerusalem as its capital, side by side with the State of Israel and bringing about peace, security and stability for all the peoples of the region. This is what the Arab initiative provides and what the Quartet is trying to achieve.

This urgent demand is not just a Palestinian or an Arab demand. It has increasingly become the demand of the moderate forces of peace in the world, since the current policy of the present Israel Government has shown that security and peace cannot be generated by repression, aggression and coercion and cannot be brought about in the light of injustice and the absence of justice.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Saudi Arabia for the kind words addressed to me.

There are a number of speakers remaining on my list who have not yet taken the floor. With the Council's agreement, I propose now to suspend the meeting. I would like to invite Council members to meet with me in the consultation room in 10 minutes.

The meeting was suspended at 6.35 p.m. and resumed at 8.40 p.m.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Algeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table.

Mr. Abdallah Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I would, from the outset, like to tell you how gratified I am to see a diplomat with your experience and talent leading the work of the Council during this month of September of living dangerously. I therefore wish you every success in carrying out the task before you. I would also like to say how grateful my delegation is to Ambassador Negroponte for having presided over the Council in a very effective and a distinguished manner.

Just when the United Nations, during the General Debate held at the beginning of every session of the General Assembly, brings together Member States, large and small, to strongly reassert their attachment to the principles and objectives of the United Nations Charter, their commitment to the rules and standards of international law, and their determination to respect and ensure respect for all resolutions of the Security Council at all times and in all places, Israel has once again, with its habitual arrogance fed by the strange complacency demonstrated by our Organization with regard to its activities, chosen this moment to attack what little was left standing after its destructive rage of a few months ago. Israel has now annihilated the last buildings where the Palestinian Authority was doing its best to maintain some sort of appearance of life, while striving to reform the Palestinian institutions, as had been demanded of it.

This obsessive frenzy of Israel and its recourse to disproportionate military means against helpless civilian targets, revealed the nature of the Zionist regime, intoxicated with its military power, and drunk day after day with its inglorious military feats, sure of its impunity.

This shows the stubborn resolve of the Israeli leadership to annihilate every hope of ever re-launching the peace process that Mr. Sharon himself has said has breathed its last. Indeed, there is no doubt this systematic policy of destruction of the buildings and infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority, and the policy of isolating President Arafat is part of a deliberate strategy to completely destroy the momentum of the peace process begun at Madrid.

There also is no doubt that the purpose is to undermine the credibility of the Palestinian Authority, to crush its motivating forces and make it impossible for it to carry out its own commitment to law and order. Then it is blamed for not containing the legitimate resistance of a people that is subjugated, repressed and humiliated on a daily basis by an occupying Power that uses the most sophisticated and devastating weapons against young people who have no shield but their bodies, such as the thirteen-year-old child who was deliberately shot in Nablus, in front of a British volunteer, by an Israeli soldier who had not even been provoked.

In other words, this clearly deliberate Israeli policy attempts to discredit and disqualify the very concept of a viable and responsible Palestinian State, a concept that has been accepted and is demanded today by the international community as a whole, and has also been unanimously endorsed by the Security Council.

What we see today in occupied Palestine is truly a situation of war, rife with danger for the Palestinian people, but also for all other people of the area, where

a war machine endowed with fearful means assails a victimized people and its symbols with unheard of ferocity.

It is incumbent upon the Security Council to put an end to this immediately. Just when the Council is very concerned with having its resolutions respected when they apply to other conflicts, it must act with the same resolve and rigour against a State which is illegally occupying the territory of other States, a country that resorts without restraint to force and threatens its neighbours every day, which shamelessly ignores resolutions of the Security Council, flouts every standard of international law and tramples underfoot the rules of international humanitarian law.

Any reluctance or hesitation on the part of the Council would be a serious failure in terms of its responsibilities and would certainly seriously damage the credibility of the Council, which we want today, more than ever, to see recognized by all and to have its role as guarantor of international peace and security recognized by all.

If we look at the responsibilities incumbent upon the Council in terms of maintaining international peace and security, and the part it must play as the pillar of our collective security, we feel with increasing urgency that the Council must act directly and energetically by immediately condemning these outrageous policies of the Israeli Government, by calling for an immediate stop to the terror campaign and destruction it is carrying out, to require that it withdraw from the Palestinian towns and locations it has been occupying since September 2000, by demanding it respect the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and by making sure, by whatever means are adequate, perhaps by sending international observers, that it see to the protection of the Palestinian population and launch the peace process once again.

Algeria holds this point of view and firmly believes, more than ever, that peace is a strategic choice and there is no alternative to negotiation. Algeria is firmly attached to a peaceful, fair, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict as proposed by the Arab Summit in Beirut based on the implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and resolution 338 (1978), and on the principle of land for peace.

Such a settlement should obviously enable Israel to withdraw from all of the occupied Arab territories, thus opening the way to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds as its capital.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement and the kind words he kindly addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Qatar. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address the Council at this extremely important meeting. This meeting is being held under grave circumstances that have deteriorated more than ever before. They call for an immediate intervention by this Council in order to put an end to the Israeli acts of aggression and for the Council to discharge its responsibilities.

We meet today a few days after the beginning of the violent attack carried out by the occupation forces in Ramallah, in particular against the compound of President Arafat, and the remaining buildings of the Palestinian Authority. You are well aware of the events and well aware of the losses to life and property.

The aim is to undermine the Palestinian Authority and Palestine's national security. This is happening at a time when Israel is calling on the Palestinian Authority to deter and stop the suicide bombings and violence. What kind of logic is that? How can the Authority play its role in maintaining security and deterring suicide attacks when Israel is destroying the infrastructure of the Palestinian security forces, apprehending and killing its members?

Israel's justifications for its acts of aggression against Ramallah and the Palestinian Authority compound, using the pretext of the Palestinian Authority's failure to stop the suicide bombings against Israel, are totally unacceptable. First, the magnitude of Israeli aggression — every time and particularly this time — is totally disproportionate to the attacks carried out by suicide bombers. Secondly, no proof has been offered of any involvement by the Palestinian Authority in instigating any suicide bombings, which have been repeatedly condemned by the Authority.

We all reject terrorism and suicide bombings. They take a toll in innocent lives. They are acts that are totally proscribed by all religions and humanitarian

values. But we must stop now and wonder about the reasons and the motives that would lead some groups and individuals to carry out such acts. The answer is simply that occupation, repression, attacks, killings, the demolition of homes, closures and blockades all lead to desperation and thus to acts of suicide. Those who have lost everything, including a dignified life, do not care about sacrificing their own lives, which are unvalued by others. Violence on the Palestinian side is therefore simply a reaction against the arbitrary occupation by the forces of occupation. The spiral of violence thus continues, and it is the innocent on both sides who alone pay the price.

By carrying out repeated massacres and confiscating Palestinian land, Israel proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that it does not wish to travel the path of peace or to accept the Quartet initiative. We view Israel's action as an attempt to kill any serious opportunity for movement towards a comprehensive peace. We view it as an attempt to impede international efforts to arrive at a peaceful settlement based on relevant United Nations resolutions and the principle of land for peace. Destroying the Palestinian Authority's infrastructure or harming its elected President, Yasser Arafat, will not ensure Israel's security. To the contrary, those actions will complicate the situation.

It is frustrating and disappointing to us that for almost two years terrible treatment has been meted out to the Palestinian people by the Israeli occupation forces, without the Security Council taking any tangible steps to put an end to the repression by the occupation forces or to compel Israel to comply with resolutions of international legality.

In that light, and in order for the Security Council to retain its credibility, we believe that the very least the Council should do today is to adopt a resolution binding upon Israel, ordering it to withdraw immediately and unconditionally from Ramallah and to lift its siege against President Arafat and members of the Palestinian Authority.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Indonesia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hidayat (Indonesia): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We are fully confident that, under your able leadership and vast experience, the work of the Council will be led to a successful conclusion. Allow me also to extend my delegation's appreciation to you for convening this urgent meeting to consider the continuing grave situation in Palestine.

Indonesia deeply regrets that the situation in the occupied territories has continued to deteriorate following repeated Israeli aggression, incursions and the accompanying widespread arrests, assassinations and destruction. We are particularly concerned at the recent attack and reoccupation of the headquarters of the President of the Palestinian Authority in the city of Ramallah, which began on 19 September 2002. Indeed, the policy of the use of military might not only endangers the personal safety and security of President Arafat; it could also ignite further violence and hence threaten the very future of the peace process. We therefore once again urge Israel to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions calling on it to immediately withdraw from Palestinian towns and cities and to stop its aggression. In that regard, Indonesia strongly demands an immediate end to the siege of Ramallah.

My delegation is also concerned that the reoccupation of Palestinian cities and the continuing policies of tightened closures, curfews and severe restrictions on the freedom of movement of persons and goods by Israel have further compounded the dire humanitarian crisis, which, as noted in the report of the Personal Humanitarian Envoy of the Secretary-General, Ms. Catherine Bertini, might spiral out of control within months. All those acts, which violate the most basic provisions of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention, must be terminated. Unless there is a reversal, the current situation will lead only to further distrust, misery and, probably, even more violence.

It is the responsibility of the international community, and especially the Security Council, to continue the search for the road to peace in the Middle East. To that end, my Government reiterates that the prospect of peace rests on full implementation of all relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and recognition of the principle of land for peace, which would lead to the realization of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and internationally recognized boundaries.

Needless to say, the situation before the Palestinian people and the Security Council is very serious, and we call on the Council to take appropriate and urgent action to avert further deterioration.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Indonesia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Cyprus. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Christofides (Cyprus): I have the honour to read out the statement of His Excellency Mr. Sotirios Zackheos, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cyprus to the United Nations.

My delegation has aligned itself with the statement of the European Union. I would like, however, to make the following brief remarks.

The Government of Cyprus has expressed on several occasions its principled position on the Palestinian question.

In particular, we have condemned unequivocally the terrorist acts and suicide bombings, which have resulted in the deaths of Israeli civilians. At the same time, we have pointed out that the continuing occupation, the destruction of the Palestinian infrastructure, the prolonging of the daily suffering of the Palestinians as a result of the closures, curfews, unemployment and the worsening economic situation do not create the necessary climate for reconciliation and regional stability.

We have all along called for restraint and moderation from both sides and implored them to look beyond confrontation and return to the negotiating table, as well as take steps to break the cycle of violence. We share the international community's belief that there can be no military solution or an imposed settlement.

We watched, with great expectations, the cessation of suicide killings for six weeks. We had indeed hoped that this development, despite the continuing Israeli actions that resulted in the loss of lives in the West Bank and Gaza, would have led to intensified moves towards a road map for achieving the goal of the international community for the existence of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders, as envisaged by resolution 1397 (2002). We therefore express our dismay over the recent escalation, following the suicide bombings in Israel and the terrorist attack on a Palestinian school in Hebron.

The Government of the Republic of Cyprus expresses its deep concern over the disproportionate Israeli response and the actions of the Israeli army aimed at the headquarters of President Arafat. We call on Israel to lift its siege without further delay.

We must be frank. We cannot understand how the siege of the Palestinian headquarters and the personal hardship imposed on the elected leader of the Palestinians can lead to an increase in Israeli security or facilitate efforts towards Palestinian reforms which are supported by the international community. We call on Israel to consider the long-term consequences of such actions.

In conclusion, we reiterate the need for the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, as well as the provisions of the Geneva Conventions. In particular, we express our concern over the killing of children and of unarmed demonstrators.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Nepal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): Let me congratulate you, Sir, for the outstanding manner in which you have been presiding over the Security Council in the month of September. Your convening of this open debate on the dangerous situation obtaining in the Middle East also deserves our full appreciation.

The escalating cycle of violence in the Middle East has reached new heights in the last few days. In response to two suicide bombings by Palestinian militants that killed six Israeli citizens, the Israeli Defence Forces have mounted a massive retaliatory action, using excessive and disproportionate force. They have laid siege to Palestinian Authority headquarters, razed its buildings to the ground and partially torn down the living quarters of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. His life appears to have been placed in imminent danger by default, if not by design.

The Middle East has been experiencing deep turmoil and an endless spate of violence for quite some time. In an effort to prevent attacks on Israel, the

Israeli Defence Forces have reoccupied the West Bank and destroyed most of the Palestinian security and development infrastructure. Curfews and restrictions have been imposed on Palestinian cities and towns. Consequently, people are living in conditions of profound hardship, without jobs and without incomes. The overall situation in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip remains extremely precarious.

This must change. As the immediate first step, the Israeli Government must withdraw from the occupied territories, stop using excessive force against the Palestinian people and lift the siege of Palestinian towns and cities. It must not do anything that is likely to harm President Arafat personally. Harming him would be an affront to civility and to the human conscience.

Nepal supports the legitimate aspiration of the Palestinian people for a State, for freedom and for progress. We also recognize Israel's right to live in security and to protect its citizens. However, neither side will achieve what it wants by stepping up the violence and further deepening hatred and animosity between the two peoples.

Indeed, there is no military solution to the Middle East problem. Only a fair and just proposal from Israel will generate hope among the Palestinians and provide them incentives to seek a peaceful, negotiated settlement.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority should restore its security and development infrastructures, try to prevent attacks against Israel and promote economic development and social progress for its peoples. The international community must help the Palestinian Authority to rebuild its infrastructure and to get a fair deal from Israel in the negotiations.

The Oslo Accords gave rise to that hope, only to see it dashed in the current cycle of bloodshed. Now the process will have to be built from the ground up once again. Security Council resolution 1397 (2002) and the Quartet agreement of July 2002 provide a way forward for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Nepal values all lives, irrespective of their nationality, race or religion. Geography, as much as history, has put the Israelis and Palestinians together. They will have to learn to live with each other. Violence will only breed violence and hatred.

The Security Council must therefore do everything in its power immediately to stop the ongoing bloodshed, to build bridges between the two peoples and to launch a political process to find a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Nepal for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is Mr. Papa Louis Fall, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Fall (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (*spoke in French*): You are aware how deeply gratified I am, Sir, to see you presiding over the work of the Security Council.

Allow me at the outset to express to you our sincere hopes for success in your term as President of the Council in this particularly busy month of September. To your predecessor, Ambassador John Negroponte, Permanent Representative of the United States, I should like to convey our deep and heartfelt gratitude for the outstanding manner in which he guided the work of the Council last month.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People is particularly concerned by the rapid deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. The responsibility for this turn of events devolves first and foremost on the Israeli Government, whose judgement is clouded by the policy of security at all costs, which, as the facts have shown with utter clarity, can only lead to deadlock and to the slippery slope that we all are witnessing today as powerless bystanders.

As the whole world knows, the President of the Palestinian Authority is under siege, cornered in the last ruined building of Ramallah and fully at the mercy of Israeli fire and bulldozers, in living conditions that are disgraceful, to say the least. Together with the European Union and others who have expressed their indignation, including Americans, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People condemns the policy of the occupying Power, just as it condemns the random and targeted attacks and massacres of civilian populations.

We make this energetic condemnation because the subhuman plight imposed on the Palestinian leadership is, paradoxically, a deliberate act by those who suffered so greatly under Nazi barbarism and who still today denounce the altogether intolerable remnants of anti-Semitism. The survivors of the Holocaust must clearly understand that the Israeli Government's choice of brutal force and boundless retaliation in unacceptable conditions of terror, which some would associate with a form of terrorism, cannot advance the cause of peace in the subregion, and even less the security that is the dream of both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.

With the consent of the President, I would like to endorse the recent exhortation by Monsignor Desmond Tutu, hero of the anti-apartheid struggle and patron of the Holocaust Centre of South Africa:

(*spoke in English*)

> "Israel will never get true security and safety through oppressing another people. True peace can ultimately be built only on justice. Therefore, Israel has three options: revert to the previous stalemated situation, or exterminate all Palestinians, or — I hope — strive for peace based on justice, based on the withdrawal from all the occupied territories and based on the establishment of a viable State on those territories, side by side with Israel, both with secure borders."

(*spoke in French*)

Just as no one can make the sun disappear, Israel's spokesmen and other representatives will never be able to make us forget that the heart of the conflict lies in Israel's perpetuation of its illegal occupation of Palestinian territories and the plethora of illegal acts associated with it. While there is still time, Tel Aviv must recognize that Israel will never live in peace and security within internationally recognized borders as long as Palestine is not free from occupation and colonization. Nothing will succeed in bringing about that peace and security: neither walls, which will fall like the Berlin Wall, nor encirclement and closure, nor wanton arrests of Palestinian activists, nor summary and extrajudicial executions nor, even less, the mass destruction of property, nor economic blockades nor the systematic dismantling of the administration of the Palestinian Authority. Such a policy has no future. Rather, the future lies in a courageous and determined resumption of the peace process on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, in particular resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002).

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People once again launches an urgent and heartfelt appeal to the Security Council, the guarantor of peace and international security, to shoulder its historic responsibilities. Posterity will not forgive it for having left unresolved for over 50 years the burning and grievous issue of Palestine. Tomorrow may perhaps be too late to act, when the entire flashpoint of the Middle East — cradle of the three great revealed religions — will have been consigned to the flames. It will be a thousand times more difficult for the Council to act tomorrow than today.

The Committee urgently demands that the occupying Power withdraw immediately and unconditionally from Palestinian territory and that it end its unacceptable siege of the offices of President Arafat. In that regard, our Committee shares the farsighted remarks made here this morning by the Secretary-General, when he said that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot be resolved solely by the use of force and that a policy exclusively based on the use of force is doomed to failure. The Committee therefore supports the Saudi initiative endorsed by the Arab Summit held in Beirut, as well as the Quartet's peace plan, which must be implemented without delay.

Through me, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People states and restates its full support for sending an international interposition force to halt the escalation of violence and to protect the lives of Palestinian and Israeli civilians.

According to the report of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, Ms. Catherine Bertini, 50 per cent of the Palestinian population depend on international assistance distributed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the World Food Programme. In addition, over 70 per cent of the population of Gaza, and 55 per cent of the population of the West Bank, are living in poverty. In the light of this, and given the rapid deterioration in the humanitarian situation in the field, the Committee urges international bodies to reinforce their assistance to the Palestinian people. The Committee also urges Israel to abide strictly by the relevant provisions of the

Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949.

Before concluding, I would like to reiterate with force and conviction our unequivocal condemnation of terrorism and terrorist acts against innocent civilians, be they Israeli or Palestinian and regardless of circumstances or motives. The suicide acts committed by Palestinian extremists on Israeli territory, which have been resolutely condemned by the Palestinian Authority, can therefore not serve as a pretext or excuse for stubbornly refusing to resume the peace process.

It should therefore be understood that the Committee holds out the sincere hope that the Council will be able to properly assess the seriousness of the situation in the Middle East and to honour the international obligations incumbent upon it under the Charter. Solutions to the crisis exist, and we are aware of them. Let us therefore implement them in the interest of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, in the interest of peace and security throughout the Middle East and in the interest of cooperation and prosperity of the peoples and nations of this sensitive region that history, geography, culture and religion must serve to unite.

I shall end my statement with the prescient remark of Mr. Binyamin Bin Eliezer, the Israeli Minister for Defence, cited in *The New York Times* of 21 September 2002:

(*spoke in English*)

> "Today there are two schools of thought in the Government ... One is to squash the Palestinians and to conquer them completely, and the other realizes that this is the time to hold out a hand and to walk side by side."

(*spoke in French*)

The Committee has no doubt whatever that the allies and other friends of Tel Aviv will be able to convince — I do not say coerce — the Israeli Government to make the right choice, namely, to take the side of those who favour peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Iraq. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin, Sir, by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I believe that your presidency will be successful as the Council is facing extremely difficult circumstances, particularly those under discussion today.

Here we are once again, and I do not believe that it will be the last time. We come to the Security Council and call upon it to discharge its responsibilities and commitments in accordance with its mandate to maintain international peace and security by providing protection for the Palestinian people, since it has not yet done so.

On 19 September 2002, the Zionist occupying forces reoccupied the headquarters and compound of President Arafat. They have destroyed a number of buildings in the compound and killed or injured a number of civilians in a new defiance of international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. It is not the first time that this has happened. The Council has been called upon to protect President Arafat and the Palestinian people several times before today. The Palestinian people, the brethren of the Iraqi people, are experiencing an unprecedented situation, comparable to other situations that humanity has known in different ages, such as the age of colonialism and the era of fascism and nazism.

At a time when the international community is incapable of taking the necessary measures to protect the Palestinian people, the war crimes perpetrated by the forces of the Zionist entity escalate. The tremendous suffering of the Palestinian people continues — for men, women and children, and in all domains of life. We Iraqis know exactly what siege is, as well as curfews, the bulldozing of land, killing, State terrorism, the cutting off of power and water supplies, and the cutting off of food and medicine. These are weapons that have commonly been used against the Palestinian people every hour and minute of the day, in addition to traditional methods and weapons such as bombings by Apache helicopters and United States tanks and armoured vehicles. All the weapons that the Israelis use are from the United States. In full view,

those weapons are being used with unprecedented brutality against an unarmed people.

Despite the fact that the Zionist entity continues its criminal acts, which have been described by many just and fair people as war crimes, crimes against humanity and State terrorism, the international community, including the Security Council, has not been able to stop those crimes or to hold the Zionist aggressor accountable. This is a case of double standards. This new United States doctrine in the United Nations will destroy what is left of the credibility of the Security Council and the United Nations — if they still possessed credibility in the eyes of some.

At a time when we really know that the specific position of one permanent member of the Security Council is not to allow the Council to take a decision on a resolution to halt the aggressor and to order the dispatch of a protection force for the Palestinian people, we are fully confident that the Council will not stay silent. It should shoulder its responsibility in accordance with the Charter.

The Palestinian people's large and spontaneous demonstrations in support of President Arafat in the towns and camps of Palestine during the last two days send a clear message to those who wish to change Governments and Presidents according to their own interests and their own likes and dislikes. Here we have the Palestinian people upholding their President. All the slogans being voiced reflect the strong faith of that people, who clearly insist on President Arafat despite the numerous American and Zionist attempts to apply pressure to replace him. The siege on President Arafat by the Zionist occupying forces is a huge challenge to the resolutions of international law and a flagrant breach of the norms of international humanitarian law and the United Nations Charter.

My delegation believes that silence in the face of such brutal crimes is silence in the face of truth. Therefore, the Security Council has a duty to take the necessary measures to protect this unarmed people and its legitimate leadership from the Zionist machine of war and destruction. This is a historic responsibility, which the Council should undertake.

The draft resolution submitted to the Council by the Arab Group is the bare minimum. It is even less than that. Therefore, any opposition to the draft resolution reflects the policy of might, to which the Security Council should put an end in all circumstances. Otherwise, the pressure will definitely lead to an explosion. It will then be too late, and everyone will be extremely regretful.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Iraq for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Morocco. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I wish you every success in your endeavours.

Once again, the Council is meeting to consider the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. It does so in the context of the ongoing Israeli escalation and the persistence of the occupying Power in its policy of demolition, murder and daily humiliation of the Palestinian people and their legitimate leadership.

I should like to recall that, immediately after these events, His Majesty King Mohammed VI, in his capacity as Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, contacted President Yasser Arafat in order to ascertain the details of the Palestinian situation, in particular in the headquarters of the Palestinian President. During that contact, the Morrocan monarch expressed the complete solidarity of the Moroccan people with the Palestinian people and their leadership in the new tragedy imposed upon them by the Israeli occupation.

We have all seen with our own eyes how Israeli bulldozers demolished the corridor separating President Arafat's bedroom from the conference wing of the building. We have all seen how all the buildings surrounding the presidential compound were destroyed. Israel's isolation of the Palestinian President and its demand that he hand over a number of his close associates can be seen only as a continuation of the policy to humiliate the Palestinian leadership and to destroy its legitimacy.

While the international community had thought that such practices were a thing of the past, we find ourselves once again facing the endless series of Israeli provocations, which have naturally led the Palestinians to demonstrate in the streets to express their support for President Arafat. Once again, the response of the

occupying forces was a violent one, leading to the killing of innocent Palestinian civilians.

It is totally unacceptable that, whenever it finds itself facing security problems on its territory, Israel should proceed to attack the Palestinian leadership and to destroy its infrastructure and the modest facilities available to the Palestinian Authority. It is high time that Israel understood that its security is inextricably linked to more serious cooperation with the Palestinian Authority and to its complete respect for the Authority's representatives. It is undeniable that the Palestinian Authority has made genuine efforts in recent weeks towards a far-reaching reform of its structure and the rationalization of its work. A scorched-earth policy has never led to the establishment of lasting peace and security in any part the world.

The Kingdom of Morocco believes that it is indeed high time for the Security Council to discharge its responsibilities at this very delicate juncture in international relations. It will thereby avert a further deterioration of the situation in the Palestinian territories and its repercussions in the rest of the region. The Kingdom of Morocco takes this opportunity to reaffirm its repudiation of all acts of violence that target innocent civilians, by whomsoever committed. It is our hope that the Security Council will condemn such acts and adopt the necessary measures to put an end to them.

The Council is called upon to adopt a resolution to rectify the situation and breathe a breath of hope for peace into the spirits of the peoples of the region, foremost among which are the Palestinian people. We sincerely hope that the Council will crown its deliberations today with the adoption of a resolution that will contribute positively to ending the violence in the region and to the creation of conditions conducive to addressing the deteriorating humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people under the occupation. We further hope that the resolution will restore the negotiations to their proper path.

The Kingdom of Morocco will remain faithful to its commitment to contribute to all serious initiatives aimed at the establishment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East that will ensure the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to the establishment of their independent State, with its capital in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, as well as Israel's withdrawal from the other Arab territories it has occupied since 1967. Such a peace must ensure security for all States and peoples of the region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Morocco for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is Mr. Amadou Kébé, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kébé (*spoke in French*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month and to express our high appreciation for the competent manner in which you have guided the Council's work. We also thank you for having convened this meeting and for having allowed the African Union to speak in this debate.

My organization is here today to bear witness and to add its voice to those of earlier speakers, who, together are endeavouring to avert the dangers that threaten Palestine, the Middle East and the entire world.

My organization has on several occasions addressed the Council in order to sound the alarm — every time the spiralling violence and the political stakes have exceeded what is tolerable and acceptable. Again today the Council must urgently debate the events in Palestine. Thanks to television, we can see, in real time, how the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority are being demolished. We know that that action is not just an attempt to intimidate or a response to suicide attacks, but a well-orchestrated plan, carried out with great care, to try, in one way or another, to eliminate President Yasser Arafat from the political scene, as the Israeli authorities have repeated again and again.

The current situation is extremely dangerous. If nothing is done immediately to put an end to this spiral of confrontation and to bring the two parties to the negotiating table, the international community, through its inaction, will have become complicit in one of the greatest tragedies in history. We will therefore continue to be a prophet of doom in an attempt to prevent a repetition of history in Palestine — a repetition of the tragedies that have occurred, century after century,

because of the silence and cowardice of those who could have taken decisive preventive action.

I should like to take this opportunity to recall the principled position of my organization on the Palestinian question. The African Union unreservedly supports the just and legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people, under the guidance of the Palestine Liberation Organization, to exercise its inalienable national rights, including the right to recover homes and property, as well as the right to self-determination and the right to an independent State on its national land, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with international law and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

My organization reaffirms its full solidarity and unreserved support for the elected President of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Yasser Arafat, the leader whom the Palestinian people freely chose in exercise of their sovereign right.

The African Union also supports all the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, in particular resolution 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002, which, inter alia, reaffirms the vision of a region in which two States — Israel and Palestine — live side by side, within secure and recognized borders.

Likewise, my organization supports all the initiatives aimed at bringing about a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Here I am thinking of the Mitchell report and the Tenet plan on security, which is designed to put an end to the cycle of violence, as well as of the Arab peace plan published at the Beirut Summit. Finally, and more specifically, I am thinking of the initiatives of the Quartet, which call for an immediate cessation of hostilities, a ceasefire and a return to the negotiating table with a view to bringing about a comprehensive settlement that covers political, economic, humanitarian and institutional aspects of the conflict.

Just as the African Union supports the settlement plan of the Quartet, it also firmly supports the Secretary-General's proposal to set up a multinational force, under Chapter VII of the Charter. The Union believes that the presence of a robust and credible United Nations force would make a positive contribution to the implementation of the Quartet initiatives.

But let us make no mistake: by destroying infrastructures, disrupting structures and institutions and arresting and assassinating Palestinian leaders, Israel is aiming at nothing less than rendering any peace plan inoperative. How can Palestinians possibly fulfil their part of the bargain under the current conditions of massive destruction?

The Palestinian and Israeli peoples have already paid too high a price for a conflict that has lasted far too long. The time has come for the various parties to allow men of goodwill to try to give peace a chance. It is not with tanks, political assassinations or suicide attacks that solutions can be found. We believe that the solution is waiting for us at the negotiating table.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Permanent Observer of the African Union for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Mauritania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ould Deddach (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): We are meeting here once again in very difficult circumstances. I should like to take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. President, for having responded to the appeal of the Arab Group to hold this open meeting of the Security Council to deal with the serious and deteriorating situation in the occupied Arab territories. This meeting is a further example of the importance of implementing resolutions of international legitimacy, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002).

It is regrettable that the Council should have to hold successive meetings in order to reaffirm once again the provisions of earlier resolutions or to adopt additional resolutions that would be unnecessary if its earlier resolutions had been implemented.

The current situation threatens to destroy all the advances that have been made on the path of peace, and it is therefore our duty to try to stop the backward movement and continue the peace process. The Council should therefore order an immediate end to the siege imposed on President Arafat and a withdrawal from Palestinian Authority lands, a halt to the destruction of the institutions of the Palestinian Authority and an end to putting the blame on President Arafat, a Nobel Laureate who is deserving of that accolade.

Security Council resolutions have not been implemented and serious humanitarian developments have resulted — since the Palestinian people face a certain humanitarian tragedy unless there is urgent intervention to provide protection for them. These are elements that in fact test the Council's credibility and require it to shoulder its responsibilities, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. It is an utmost priority that the Council ensure the implementation of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 in order to enable humanitarian agencies and organizations to freely provide assistance to the brotherly Palestinian people.

We in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania once again reaffirm our full solidarity with the brotherly Palestinian people and with its legitimate leader, Yasser Arafat (Abu Amar). We call on the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities in the light of the gravity of the situation, which does not allow any form of procrastination, and to adopt the draft resolution submitted to it for consideration.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Mauritania for his kind words addressed to me.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. In conformity with the agreement reached in the course of the Council's prior consultations, I invite members of the Council to return to the Consultation Room to pursue consideration of the matter.

The meeting was suspended at 9.55 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4614 (Resumption 2)

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4614th meeting

Tuesday, 24 September 2002, 2.20 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Tafrov	(Bulgaria)
Members:	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Traoré
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Letter dated 20 September 2002 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/1055)

Note verbale dated 20 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/1056)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-60164 (E)

The meeting resumed at 2.20 a.m.

The President *(spoke in French)*: As we agreed in consultations, we shall vote on the draft resolution on the basis of the English text, which is before us. The draft resolution will be circulated in blue very shortly, but I would like to know whether members are prepared to vote on the basis of the document that is now before them. I see this is the case.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2002/1063, which contains the text of a draft resolution presented by Bulgaria, France, Ireland, Norway and the United Kingdom. It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. If I hear no objection, I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bulgaria, Cameroon, China, Colombia, France, Guinea, Ireland, Mauritius, Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, Singapore, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Abstaining:

United States of America

The President *(spoke in French)*: The result of the voting is as follows: 14 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 1435 (2002).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): The resolution that we have adopted this evening was flawed, in our view, in that it failed to explicitly condemn the terrorist groups and those who provide them with political cover, support and safe haven in the perpetuation of conflict in the Middle East. Those responsible for killing civilians obstruct the Quartet's efforts and the prospects for Palestinian reform. They are known groups — Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade. The leaders and spokesmen of these groups have openly claimed credit for scores of terrorist bombings and for many deaths and injuries. Their actions are aimed at the peace process, at Israelis and at Palestinians.

This Council cannot claim to be seriously considering efforts in the Middle East unless it is also willing to recognize the tragic dynamic at play. Each time a glimmer of hope, however dim, appears, a terrorist act rises up to extinguish it. What we had hoped for at this time was for the Council to assume its responsibilities, take a clear stand against the actions of these terrorist groups and call for action against them.

This resolution starts that process, but it does not go far enough. Nor does it provide the clarity and context we think is required, as set out in the draft text we ourselves tabled on Monday. Our text was more explicit on terrorism, those who perpetuate it, the need to combat it, and on strong support for the Quartet, the political process and continued effort on the ground in the region. Because this resolution does not meet that standard, and because we do not think it as well conceived or worded as it should be, given the importance of the issues it addresses, we have abstained.

The President *(spoke in French)*: There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 2.30 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.4615

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4615th meeting

Tuesday, 24 September 2002, 7.20 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Tafrov	(Bulgaria)
Members:	Cameroon	Mr. Chungong Ayafor
	China	Mr. Jiang Jiang
	Colombia	Mr. Ocaziones
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Guinea	Mr. Traoré
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Egge
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Harrison
	United States of America	Ms. Connelly

Agenda

The situation in Sierra Leone

Fifteenth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (S/2002/987)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-60257 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 7.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Sierra Leone

Fifteenth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (S/2002/987)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Sierra Leone in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone) took the seat reserved for him at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2002/987, which contains the text of the fifteenth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/2002/1062, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution. If I hear no objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bulgaria, Cameroon, China, Colombia, France, Guinea, Ireland, Mauritius, Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, Singapore, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1436 (2002).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 7.25 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4616

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4616th meeting

Thursday, 26 September 2002, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Tafrov	(Bulgaria)
Members:	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Traoré
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Consideration of the draft report of the Security Council to the General Assembly

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-60544 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Consideration of the draft report of the Security Council to the General Assembly

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now proceed to the consideration of its annual report to the General Assembly, the draft of which has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Members of the Council have before them the draft report of the Security Council to the General Assembly for the period from 16 June 2001 to 31 July 2002, as circulated by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs on 9 August 2002, and a corrigendum thereto.

I should like to express appreciation to the Secretariat for the work it has undertaken in preparing this factual report.

As there is no list of speakers for this meeting, I would invite Council members who wish to take the floor to so indicate to the Secretariat as from now.

I shall now call on the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs to make an explanatory statement.

Mr. Kalomoh (Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs): The draft annual report of the Security Council for the period 16 June 2001 to 31 July 2002, to be submitted to the General Assembly in pursuance of Article 24, paragraph 3, of the United Nations Charter, has been prepared by the Secretariat, in line with the revised format agreed upon by the Security Council in 2002.

The format of the draft report before the Council provides a guide to the activities of the Council in a concise manner. In this connection, I would like to note that this is the first report prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Note by the President of the Council of 22 May 2002, which is contained in document S/2002/199, which were aimed at enhancing the quality of the report and accommodating the views expressed on the previous format.

Of particular interest is the introduction to the report, which contains an analytical summary of the work of the Council for the period covered by the report.

The draft report was circulated by me on 9 September 2002, in my capacity as Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to the current Members of the Security Council and to the members whose terms of office expired on 31 December 2001 for review and comment, if any.

A corrigendum containing a change requested by one Council Member is also before the Council.

The President: At this stage, I wish to thank the Secretariat for having prepared the draft report in a timely manner.

I would now like to call upon Council members who wish to state their views on this draft report.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Kalomoh for introducing the report. I also want to begin by saying that today's meeting is, in some ways, a historic one. This, we believe, is the first time that Council members will be discussing openly the annual report before submitting it to the General Assembly for its consideration. The President of the Security Council will also refer to the provisional verbatim record of this meeting when he presents the report to the General Assembly. I hope this will explain to our colleagues here why I may have to deliver a slightly longer statement than usual, because if I do not deliver it, it will not enter the provisional verbatim records.

We believe that the new format of the annual report has actually rectified a defect in the way the Security Council reports were previously submitted to the General Assembly, a defect which was, incidentally, mentioned in "the bible" of the Security Council, which we know to be the "Bailey and Daws" publication. Bailey and Daws said:

> "[w]hile the report in its present form provides an occasion for United Nations Members to raise concerns about the work of the Council over the previous twelve months, it does very little to facilitate the raising of such concerns". (S. Bailey and S. Daws, *The Procedure of the UN Security Council*, 3rd ed., p. 290)

I hope we have taken care of this problem.

Together with our colleagues we are pleased to have made a small contribution to the improvement of

the format and content of the Security Council's Annual Report. It has been dramatically reduced in size, from 571 pages to approximately 291 pages and, as Mr. Kalomoh said, there was a last minute corrigendum that managed to deduct approximately 90 pages. Each page cut from the Report saves approximately $1,000, so we have saved about $300,000 this year in the preparation of this Report.

At the same time, more statistical information has been provided on the Security Council's deliberations and activities. Equally important there is an analytical overview in the introduction to the Report. We will not go into the details of the changes made; instead, in the text of the Report we have attached an explanatory note which sets out all the improvements made in the new format. We thought it would be useful to have a public record of these changes.

Let me also pay a tribute to my colleague, Christine Lee, who, as you know, worked very hard on this report, as well as many of your colleagues and experts, to produce this revised format.

Many observers of the Council sitting outside may be surprised that we have taken the time to provide the details of these small changes and improvements. We should explain why we mention these innovations. After 21 months on the Council, we have discovered that the Security Council, perhaps with some justification, is one of the most conservative institutions in the world today. In this year's General Assembly, the Secretary-General will be trying to instil a spirit of reform into both the General Assembly, including its subsidiary bodies, and the Secretariat.

This spirit of reform has not yet fully infected the Security Council. We have noticed that the Council is particularly conservative in its working methods and procedures. For example, despite our efforts to push for regular meetings of the Council's Working Group on procedures and working methods, there have only been six meetings of this Working Group during the period covered by the Report. We have also tried to formalize the system of drawing of names to determine the speakers' list for public meetings. So far, we have not succeeded. Similarly, it is remarkable that the Council's rules of procedure remain provisional after 57 years. Equally important, and I hope this is a major point, despite the proliferation of various forms of meetings of the Council, there is no agreement on their nomenclature and modalities. Having spoken with colleagues outside the Council, I can say there is considerable confusion about the meanings of the phrases: open meeting, closed meeting, private open meeting and so on. I think it is time to standardize this nomenclature.

The reluctance of the Council to institutionalize the Working Group on procedures and working methods is puzzling, because there have been significant improvements in the Council's working methods. For example, the Council has established new mechanisms for consultations with the troop-contributing countries (TCCs) and held public wrap-up sessions so that TCCs and the wider United Nations membership can share their views and interact in a frank and open manner with Council members. The TCCs have appreciated these changes.

A permanent United Nations Security Council Presidency web site has been set up so that non-Council Members can have quicker access to information related to the Security Council's work. The Council has also had more Arria-formula meetings to listen to the views of other external actors including the academia, media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In the past year, the Council's deliberations have become more efficient and effective and more interactive and analytical through the use of fact sheets, assessment-based reports, and the practice of alternating between Council and non-Council members in public meetings of the Council.

Many of these developments are outlined in a report prepared by the Secretariat and circulated as Security Council document S/2002/603 dated 6 June 2002. We highly commend this report to United Nations Members as it provides a comprehensive account of changes in the Security Council's practices in 2001. I hope Member State will refer to this document when they speak on the issue of the Security Council's Annual Report in the General Assembly.

The Secretary-General has also noted these improvements in his report on the "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387), a report that came out on Monday 23 September 2002 and which he presented to regional groups. Yesterday, for example he presented it to the Asian group. In his report he pointed out:

> "The Security Council has significantly improved its working methods over the past few years — stimulated, in part, by the thoughtful

> deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group. The Council has become more transparent, offering greater opportunities for the wider membership of the United Nations to participate in its work. There has been an increased number of open meetings with participation by non-members of the Security Council, briefings for the wider membership of the Organization, and improved arrangements for consultations with troop-contributing countries." (A/57/387, para. 21)

Hence, the Secretary-General recommended, as part of its reform package that the Security Council "might consider codifying the recent changes in its own practice." (Ibid.)

Moving on from procedural innovations to the substance of the Report, we should acknowledge that the main criticism, which has been repeated year after year in each year's General Assembly debate of the Security Council's Annual Report, is that the Report is not analytical and therefore cannot be used as a basis for evaluating the work of the Council.

In theory, the complaint of the General Assembly Members is fair. That is why we made the analytical component of the Report one of the key themes in our speech at the General Assembly debate last year. However, after having served on the Council, we have come to realise that the Members of the General Assembly may be making an impossible demand of the Council. Given the heavy workload of the Council and the highly politicized and controversial nature of many of the issues discussed by the Council, it would take months of negotiations for the 15 Council Members to agree on a common analytical evaluation of the performance of the Council.

Despite this, this year's Annual Report contains a brief analytical overview that was skilfully drafted by the United Kingdom delegation during their Presidency of the Council in July. We congratulate Sir Jeremy Greenstock and his team for the work they did preparing this overview.

We also believe that the assessments and reflections of the individual Council members at today's debate will provide a good basis to evaluate the Council's performance. More importantly, while the processes of the Council's decision-making may often take place behind closed doors, the results of the Council's work are now much more clear and visible. Its resolutions, Presidential Statements and press statements are public documents. The results of peacekeeping operations authorized by the Security Council, now amounting to almost $3 billion annually, are also clearly visible. Hence, there is more than enough public data available to evaluate the performance of the Council when the General Assembly meets.

We would, therefore, like to suggest that a more constructive course for the General Assembly Members would be to try to formulate a set of agreed criteria that could be used to evaluate the performance of the Council. Some of the questions included could be the following: First, has the Council successfully managed the issues under its purview; have lives been saved or improved by the Council's work? Secondly, has the Council improved its procedures and working methods to generate greater efficiency and effectiveness in its work? Thirdly, has the Council become more transparent and open in its work and in its relationship with the wider United Nations membership? And fourthly, has the Council enhanced or diminished its credibility and prestige in the international community?

These are only preliminary suggestions. We are confident that our colleagues can improve on them and probably develop better criteria.

In our considered view, any objective evaluation of the performance of the Council for the period covered in this year's Annual Report should result in an overall positive assessment. It has been a good year. There have been many success stories. It would be impossible to cite all of them but it may be useful to cite a few as an illustrative list.

First, with regard to terrorism, the Council's response to the threat of terrorism after Sept 11, especially through its substantive resolutions, the Counter-Terrorism Committee chaired by Sir Jeremy Greenstock and the 1267 Sanctions Committee chaired by Ambassador Valdivieso, demonstrated the real value of the Council. The Security Council legitimized a global response. It also provided the necessary leadership to galvanize international action. If the Security Council had not existed on 12 September 2001, it would have had to be invented then. The fight against terrorism showed once again the indispensability of the Council.

Secondly, with regard to East Timor, the work of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East

Timor (UNTAET) paved the way for the birth of the Democratic Republic of East Timor on 20 May 2002, and East Timor will be admitted as a full United Nations Member by the General Assembly tomorrow. The Council's enlightened decision to establish the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor as a successor to UNTAET to continue to assist East Timor to maintain security and stability and carry out core areas of administration in the early years of its independence was reflective of the Council's commitment to institute clear and credible exit strategies for the United Nations.

Regarding Afghanistan, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi helped shepherd the Bonn process and, through his effective leadership of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, he continues to ensure its implementation. Incidentally, as an aside, yesterday somebody was telling me that if there were free and fair elections in Afghanistan, Ambassador Brahimi would be elected President overnight. He is the most popular person in Afghanistan today. So far, Afghanistan has surpassed all expectations in moving back towards the path of peace and stability, even though many challenges remain. The problem, as we know, is that the security situation remains fragile, but there continues to be strong reluctance to consider the geographical expansion of the International Security Assistance Force. That has to be addressed by the Council.

Finally, with regard to Sierra Leone, the return of delicate peace and stability to Sierra Leone, following the successful elections held on 14 May 2002 and the ongoing efforts by the Sierra Leone Government to implement recovery measures, has bolstered the credibility of the Council and has reaffirmed the important role it plays.

But, to be completely candid, the Council is a human institution; therefore, it has its share of successes and failures. Some of its files clearly need more attention. Again, as an illustrative rather than a comprehensive list, let me cite a few examples.

The Working Group on sanctions was originally scheduled to complete its work in November 2000. Now, almost two years later, it remains trapped in a logjam. We hope that Council members will support Ambassador Belinga-Eboutou, as he tries to revitalize this Working Group.

The Middle East crisis has been aggravated in recent months. However, the Council adopted resolution 1397 (2002), which was a landmark resolution that reaffirmed the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, can live side by side within secure and recognized borders. We hope that the Quartet, a new diplomatic vehicle, will work to implement it.

On the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Council has, so far, not been able to follow up decisively on the initiative proposed by the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region in April 2002. That could affect the credibility of the Council as well as its future missions. However, in view of the recent agreements signed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo with Rwanda and Uganda, the Council is now provided with new opportunities to respond positively to the Secretary-General's recommendations on how the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo can play a bigger role.

Somalia was clearly one of the strategic orphans — and I hope that phrase will not be misunderstood — of the Council until Norway took it up. Still, the Council needs to develop a comprehensive policy to deal with the security and humanitarian dimensions of the Somalia issue.

Liberia was also one of the Council's strategic orphans until Ambassador Zinser of Mexico recommended a fresh look at it. Clearly, the Council needs to have a comprehensive and coherent policy to protect its major investments in West Africa.

Finally, the increasing complexities relating to the issue of refugees and internally displaced persons from situations in the Council's many conflict files have not been adequately addressed by the Council today. Indeed, the Council needs to establish a cohesive and coordinated approach in cooperation with other relevant United Nations bodies, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, just to name a few.

Neither of those lists is exhaustive. We have not mentioned many significant issues, including Iraq, which is the subject of the day, Western Sahara, Georgia, Cyprus, the Balkans, and so on. But in the limited time we have, it would be impossible to list all the successful and less successful files. Nevertheless,

when the General Assembly meets to review this year's Annual Report, we hope that they will refer to the evaluations made by the members of the Council who have been actively involved in the management of those difficult issues.

Finally, in conclusion, I hope, Mr. President, that you will permit me to end my remarks by suggesting that it may be useful practice for members of the Council to also provide recommendations on how the Council can improve its performance in subsequent years. For our part, we would like to suggest at least two areas.

First, I think the Council should respond positively to the suggestion made by the Secretary-General that we should "codify" improvements made by the Council. Both the institutional structure of the Council and the work of the Council have grown in size and complexity. Yet, there is no single adequate description of the full range of activities conducted by the Council, which now include public meetings, private meetings, informal consultations, meetings with troop-contributing countries, working groups, formal and informal friends groups, contact groups, and so on. It is time for someone to draw a full picture of the total architecture of the Council. Once we have clearly drawn the big picture, it will be easier to review the Council.

At the same time, the Security Council should also respond positively to the Secretary-General's efforts to imbue the United Nations family with a new spirit of reform. One way of introducing a culture of innovation to the Council is for the informal Working Group on the working methods and procedures to be more active. Each Council member should designate an expert on organizational innovation and improvement, and that Council Working Group should meet regularly. Hopefully, that Working Group can make suggestions that will improve the working methods, reduce the workload, enable the Council to spend its time focusing on those issues that require the most attention and on its Charter responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The second suggestion we would like to make is that the Council should meet periodically to do a strategic review of its work. While its workload has grown by leaps and bounds — and I think that is documented in the reports — the Council has not found opportunities to do a strategic overview of all the work done. There is no conscious effort to prioritize the work of the Council. Often, the most urgent, rather than the most important, issues are given the most attention. Annually there is only one occasion for such a strategic review of the work of the Council. That takes places during the annual retreat of the Security Council with the Secretary-General. We commend the Secretary-General for hosting his retreats, but it may be useful to find other occasions for a comprehensive and strategic review of the work of the Council. All organizations find it healthy to do this. The Council should do no less.

It may be useful for the Council to conduct from time to time an in-depth review and evaluation of its own action or often non-action, as the case may be, especially on the long-standing files so as to invigorate them. It may be too easy to blame the protagonists concerned. Instead of blaming others, the Council should stop and ask itself, why have these situations not improved? Merely responding by issuing more press, presidential statements and resolutions may not be enough in most instances. We should review and see if we have become too comfortable with conservative and safe positions, instead of looking for alternative and creative solutions.

The credibility of the Security Council will only be eroded over time if the Council is habitually seen to be unable to meet its responsibilities with regard to those long-standing files. Its press releases, Presidential Statements and resolutions could be ignored if there is a perceived gap between the Council's intentions and its actual accomplishments.

Finally, I hope that, as was the case under the Irish presidency of the Council in October 2001, after the General Assembly debate on the Annual Report scheduled for next month, the Council will discuss the comments and suggestions raised during the debate to reflect on the key points made, so as to consider further improvements to the Council's working methods, work and future reports. Last year, Singapore submitted a brief summary of the key points made at the general debate to facilitate such a discussion. We would be happy to do so again this year. The Council's discussion of the points raised at the General Assembly will go a long way towards meeting our common objective of building a relationship of trust and confidence between the General Assembly and the Security Council.

One more final point, I apologize for having read out at great length the statement, but if I had not read it out, it would not appear in the provisional verbatim record, and therefore it would not be circulated. My apologies to all my colleagues for having done this to them.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): I had a text to read out, but I think that after Ambassador Mahbubani's long statement, I will instead contribute to a spontaneous discussion, at the risk of having appear in the verbatim record statements that are not carefully weighed word by word.

Kishore Mahbubani's final comment was interesting. It was, in the end, a practical recommendation. I think that if we wish to have lively debates, we must make sure that texts such as that just read out by Ambassador Mahbubani can be included in the verbatim record without first having to be read out. That way, we would then be able to have the conversation that I am now trying to start. I think that this is an additional reform that we should consider.

I would like to begin by welcoming the extraordinary determination demonstrated by Ambassador Mahbubani, Christine Lee and the entire Singaporean team in transforming the annual report. I think that is a small but absolutely necessary task. We no longer have an unusable compilation but a report enabling anyone to find an immediate record of our work during a given year. Not only have we saved money for the United Nations, which in itself is a good thing — in fact, we will have to decide among ourselves what to do with those savings — but also and more importantly, we are making available to all Member countries a genuine working tool.

As did our friend Kishore, I would like to include Ambassador Greenstock in my congratulations because the introduction is, I think, the beginning of an analytical section. The Security Council is a slowly evolving animal, but I think that the example given by Ambassador Greenstock is a good start on an analytical section, which could gradually find its way into the beginning of the annual report.

Beyond my comments on the annual report, I think that today's discussion is an opportunity to reflect once more on our working methods. What strikes me in listening to Ambassador Mahbubani, as compared to his statement last year in the General Assembly, is that in his view we have made a great deal of progress. I think that is an accurate judgement. If we take a look at the development of the Security Council's working methods since its creation more than 50 years ago, we can see that we have gone from a period of hibernation to a period of increasingly rapid development. Some would say that the progress is not yet rapid enough. But I am struck by how the Security Council has been able to develop its working methods pragmatically. If we compare the Council to the General Assembly, we could say that in this friendly competition, the Council has taken the lead. When we take a look at the way in which the monthly programme is decided on and prepared, when we see the goals we set for ourselves, and when we think about the wrap-up sessions, which are dear to some and criticized by others, we can say that in terms of organization, we are making progress while still retaining the necessary flexibility in our work, which is dictated by constantly changing events.

Ambassador Mahbubani spoke of transparency. It is true that never in the history of the United Nations has the Security Council held so many public meetings. We have broken all records. He was right in mentioning our openness to civil society through our Arria-formula meetings, which enable us to meet with the representatives of non-governmental organizations, who come to enrich our work and who transform the Council's image by showing its ability to listen, beyond the circle of States, to all those who can make a useful contribution.

Aside from those meetings with civil society, our ability to work with other Member States has also improved. Ambassador Greenstock once again deserves to be commended, this time as Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee. His actions are an example of what we all should be doing when we have the responsibility of chairing a committee or working group. The ad hoc working group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa is also a very good working tool, which we should use even more.

I would add a last point. Security Council missions beyond the Chamber, to countries, have become for us — and also, I think, for our partners in the various regions that we visit — an absolutely indispensable element for working better with the countries concerned and with regional and subregional organizations.

Those examples show that we have indeed been able to evolve.

Ambassador Mahbubani referred to the successes and frustrations that we have had over the past year. I would mention an issue to which he referred: sanctions. It is true that for two years we have tried to agree on and to adopt a document. We are deadlocked. Nevertheless, we can observe that after the decade of sanctions, we have been able to develop a tool that is at our disposal alongside words, statements, resolutions and the use of force. Today, sanctions are a more refined and more targeted tool. We have introduced time limits. I think that is a major advance, even if some seated at the Council table do not agree. We have also begun to pay attention to humanitarian consequences. I think that those are two areas of progress, among others, that demonstrate that on that issue too the Council has been able to evolve in the right direction.

I will conclude by asking about one suggestion made by Ambassador Mahbubani. Is it necessary to codify all of this? At the risk of surprising my colleagues, I would say that I gladly side with British pragmatism. In France, we are obsessed with codifying everything, beginning with our Constitution. Experience has shown that now, and at an ever faster pace, we are changing our Constitution because the world is changing very quickly. As for the English, they do not have a written Constitution, and they are doing very well. I think that perhaps we should follow the wisdom and pragmatism of the British in our working methods. It is good to develop our working methods. I believe that we have been to do so fairly quickly. Let us continue to do so without getting bogged down too much in codification.

Mr. Strømmen (Norway): Let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on convening this meeting regarding the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. Norway continues to attach the highest importance to transparency in the working methods of the Security Council. The full sharing of information and views with the wider membership of the Organization on the issues before the Council is a pivotal aspect of the Council exercising its mandate. In this regard, let me also pay tribute to the delegation of Singapore for its effort to enhance technical aspects of the work of the Council, including the annual report. Norway fully supports the draft report as presented.

Above all, the Security Council is a political organ at the disposal of Member States to resolve conflicts representing a threat to international peace and security. This also implies that the working methods of the Council may need a certain degree of flexibility in order to facilitate creative approaches suited to the challenges at hand.

During the past year the Council has dealt with a vast number of issues. To a considerable degree, public meetings have been used as a means of sharing information and views on those issues. However, Norway continues to believe and argue that an even larger proportion of the briefings and material prepared by the Secretariat could and should be made directly available to the wider membership.

The positions of the Government of Norway on the various issues on the Council's agenda are well known through our earlier specific deliberations. I will not spend our valuable time repeating those positions here today. Rather, I will focus on areas in which the Council has taken important steps through the use of three particular mechanisms at its disposal.

First, to enhance the cooperation with troop-contributing countries, the Council regularly convenes consultation meetings prior to mandate considerations, in accordance with resolution 1353 (2001). Importantly, the troop-contributing countries assume the political and personnel risk associated with United Nations operations and must therefore be consulted fully by the Council. It is imperative that this include early consultations at the stage where plans are made and proposals formulated in the system. To this end, the Council in January of this year established a new mechanism for more such informal consultations. As the Chair of this mechanism, I encourage all major troop-contributing countries to fully explore this vehicle for engagement with Council members, as well as with the Secretariat. Importantly, the new mechanism allows for troop-contributing countries themselves to raise emerging issues, as they see fit. We saw this being played out in full in August when the mechanism was utilized on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone.

Secondly, the Council has on two occasions in 2002 visited areas of conflict or areas emerging from conflict in Africa. In February, under the leadership of Ambassador Kolby, a full Council met with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia and President Isaias Afwerki of Eritrea. The meetings took place on the eve of the border decision, in accordance with the Algiers Agreement. The border decision was subsequently

embraced by both sides and is currently being implemented in close cooperation with the United Nations. In May, under the leadership of Ambassador Levitte, a full Council met with leaders of the Great Lakes region in order to promote peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Recently, we have seen steps in the right direction taken by several of the involved parties, in accordance with the encouragements provided by the Council. The Council continues to be actively engaged on these issues. The missions to Ethiopia and Eritrea and the Great Lakes have illustrated that Council missions are a useful tool for engaging the parties to certain conflicts. Based on these useful experiences, we fully support the concept of Council missions. At the same time, cognizant of the concerns related to costs raised by some non-members of the Council, we would be favourably inclined to reduce the size of such missions to a representative core consisting of some six to eight members.

Thirdly and finally, the Council, in July of this year, mandated a panel of experts to provide independent information on violations of the arms embargo on Somalia with a view to improving its enforcement. Panels of experts can in certain instances provide independent and authoritative information, alerting the international community to activities that undermine the quest for peace. As such, the panels may play an important role in forcing actors to pay a political price for actions that run counter to the objective of peace.

Through membership on the Council, Norway has consistently sought to raise the Council's attention to the Somalia problem. The country has been without a central Government for more than 10 years and the arms embargo established by the Council in 1992 has hardly been enforced. The steps taken by the Council this year have thus been long overdue. These steps must be further built upon in order to restore the United Nations credibility vis-à-vis that wartorn country. The ongoing efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to bring peace and order to Somalia, through the conference facilitated by Kenya on 15 October, has wide support from the international community. Importantly, the United Nations must stand ready to do its part to assist fully and actively in Somalia's return to normalcy. Norway will continue to contribute actively to the issue of Somalia as part of an overall focus on African issues.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): I am very grateful to Mr. Kalomoh for firing the starting gun on this.

I think we have a report this year which is genuinely interesting, certainly by comparison with previous years, and I echo Ambassador Levitte and others who give the right credit to Ambassador Mahbubani, Minister Lee and the Singapore team for not just driving us to do this, but for providing the main substance for how to do this. I really think it has been a very valuable exercise and I admire the way that Ambassador Mahbubani has led it. I shall come in a moment to comment on some things in his statement, because, along with Jean-David Levitte, I would very much hope that this will be an interactive discussion and I shall have some things to say about it.

It has been an extraordinary year for the Council in a number of ways. Of course, 11 September set the tone and Afghanistan was an extremely important theme, but, after several years on the Council, I get the sense that we are really beginning to move in the right direction in a number of ways. In this past year, we have also been almost uniquely busy. The previous record for the number of open meetings was set in November 2001, under the Jamaican presidency. The United Kingdom, for a number of reasons beyond our control, pipped that in July and we had 29 open meetings. No doubt, that record will fall quite quickly soon in the future, but the intensity of what is being demanded of the Council by the nature of the world, by globalization and by at least some partial successes of the Council is, I think, to be remarked on.

Quantity on its own is clearly not enough, however, and I just want to comment on two other aspects: the quality of the Council's work and transparency. Quality is going to have some subjective judgements attached to it, but I want to preface what I say with a comment about the nature of the Council and its place in the firmament of the people and institutions dealing with maintaining international peace and security. We are primarily responsible, but let us not make the mistake of believing that we have to be solely responsible. This Organization, the United Nations, works best — and really only works at all — if every Member State takes up its own responsibilities. This is a forum of nations and the Security Council, being also made up of 15 nations at any one time, is working from national instructions and is not able on

its own, in those circumstances, to get everything right without a great deal of coordination and cooperation.

I think Afghanistan has been a very good example of this over the past year because, not least through our being able to tap into the brilliant diplomacy of someone like Lakhdar Brahimi, we have been able, as the United Nations, to create the framework for things going right in Afghanistan. However, the United Nations on its own, and certainly the Security Council on its own, has not been able to produce the instruments for that being done. It has been necessary to draw on a number of other sources of that — quite clearly, from the power and energy of the United States in settling the security in Afghanistan; quite clearly, from the enormous work done by the humanitarian agencies; and quite clearly, from the money poured into all that business by those Member States that had the capacity to do so and were determined not to see Afghanistan go wrong. But the coordinating activity of the Security Council and the legitimacy and the framework that it gave to all those exercises were indispensable and very well judged as we went along.

In Africa, which remains the area where we have to do most of our work in rather more complex circumstances, I think that we are also learning how to have an effect, not least through our influence on those who themselves have to be the instruments of success in bringing Africa to greater peace and prosperity.

I think that turning Sierra Leone around, and seeing that crystallized in the elections that were held during the past year, was a particular point of satisfaction for the Security Council, after bad experiences in 1999 and 2000. But it was not possible for the Security Council to do that without an enormous contribution on the ground from the peacekeepers involved there, from the leadership of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, from the Government of Sierra Leone itself, from those nations that particularly wanted to add their own input and see it go right and from civil society, the non-governmental organizations and the United Nations funds, agencies and programmes which were coordinated on the ground, not least under the advice of the Security Council mission of October 2000. That is another example of how the Security Council reaches out to other instruments and plays a coordinating, motivating, monitoring and driving role.

Sometimes we cannot get that right. In the Middle East we have much more of a problem because of the polarization of politics. Although the Security Council can always do better in these areas, it is necessary to remember that, beyond the Security Council, every Member State involved in a crisis or other situation has to play its own role in the understanding of the collective nature of United Nations business. States cannot play a unilateral role in the modern world, but they must play a role that adds power to the collective objectives of the United Nations. If that is not forthcoming in a particular situation, the Security Council is hamstrung.

I think that it is worth noting that, as we have made improvements over the past two or three years, the habit of consensus in the Council has empirically grown. We pass almost all of our resolutions by a vote of 15 to none. We all know that that adds power to the effect of the Council's work, and it is something that we have learned to go for and that we should stick to in every application that we possibly can. Resolutions 1352 (2001) and 1382 (2001) on Iraq are examples of that. It would be very good if we could continue that experience. It has happened in a number of other areas, not least with regard to resolution 1397 (2002) on the Middle East peace process, from which we should draw lessons to see where the Security Council is best able to work effectively in the most complex situations. But we will not always be able to manage that.

I agree with Ambassador Levitte that our missions have evolved remarkably, and I pay tribute to what he himself has done on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with his three annual forays into that particular difficult maelstrom — we will miss him in that respect.

But we have had an effect on the parties on the ground by personally visiting their offices and showing that we were determined to require them to implement the agreements that they themselves willingly entered into. That is another example of interaction between the Council as a collective body and the individual responsibilities of Member States.

We should note also that there are some major areas where the Security Council has been prevented from entering. We can think of a number of serious crises — crises within States, which have an international character, and between States, where there is still a huge danger of conflict — which have not

been brought to the Council. I cannot think of any such crises that have benefited from not being brought to the Council. Of course, there are some issues that the Council does not resolve; but I do not believe that avoiding the Council is empirically the right way to go.

On transparency, I am with France and Norway, and certainly with Singapore: we can do more. I would not mind virtually all of our meetings being open, except when we are negotiating closely on texts or on issues which just cannot afford to be in the public eye. But I think that transparency adds to the collective nature of the Security Council, which works for all States Members of the United Nations, and if the Counter-Terrorism Committee has been able to make some advances in that area, it is only because I perceived that Member States were very willing to respond to the necessary business of meeting their obligations under resolution 1373 (2001). I attribute that transparency to Member States for responding in a transparent atmosphere, rather than to any new initiative from within the Counter-Terrorism Committee. It has helped us to stay together in the Committee but, much more importantly, it has helped the United Nations membership to stay together on perhaps the most important new initiative that the Security Council has taken in the past year.

I look forward to an interesting and interactive debate within the General Assembly. I think that that is the point of this report — to have a good debate in the General Assembly. Of course, non-Council members can sling arrows at the Council if they wish, but I hope they will also pay attention to the realities of how we have to work in the context of each conflict, and I hope that they contribute to the continuation of achievable improvements in the Council by making constructive, as well as critical, remarks.

I would add a further question to the four questions that Ambassador Mahbubani posed in his statement, relating to whether the Council has responded adequately to the greater demands put upon it by the process of globalization. I think that we have to recognize, as he did in his presentation, that the world is moving faster than the Council —Ambassador Levitte referred to that. The Council is catching up, but we must move further if the world is not to move on ahead of us.

As for the detailed improvements that he suggested in his conclusion, yes, I agree with them. But I am not sure that the informal working group on procedure is quite the point. The point is for Ambassadors in this Council to use their individual responsibilities and powers to make a difference in the way that this Council produces results. If it is the Ambassador of France who is suggesting a British pragmatism, who am I to suggest that that is not the way to go forward? I believe that he has touched on the right point there: we do not need to institutionalize; we need to achieve results in practice. I think we are beginning to show how to do that, and I will certainly do the best I can to follow the spirit of Mahbubani and Singapore and achieve those results.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): This year, the report of the Council to the General Assembly has a new format: it is more focused and shorter. The cost of production has thus been reduced. That is in line with the desire and aspirations of the wider membership. It is also a result of cooperation and efforts on the part of Council members. In this respect, I would like to mention the leadership of Singapore and the contribution made by the Secretariat.

The past year saw improvements in the working methods of the Council that led to increased transparency and effectiveness. Maintaining the Council's authority and striving for consensus have increasingly become our shared goal, and we hope that such positive momentum can be sustained. As the main body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council has, in the past year, considered important issues in a timely manner and taken rapid action to deal with them.

In particular, following the 11 September terrorist attacks, the Council swiftly adopted resolution 1373 (2001) and established the Counter-Terrorism Committee, which has played an indispensable role in coordinating the international fight against terrorism. At the critical moment when the Afghan situation took a dramatic turn, a united Council, through its swift decision, played a major role in pushing for comprehensive implementation of the Bonn Agreement and elimination of the Taliban and Al Qaeda. The Council focused its attention on various hot spots in Africa, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola and Sierra Leone. It also dispatched special missions to gather specific information on the ground.

Thanks to the efforts of the Council and of all parties concerned, there have been positive

developments in African conflicts. However, there is still a gap between the work of the Council and the expectations of African countries. Therefore, the Council should seize the opportunity to redouble its efforts and to actively support the work of regional organizations such as the African Union so that its efforts to resolve African conflicts can bear fruit.

It is also worth noting that the Council's role concerning the Middle East-Palestinian question has fallen short of expectations. Despite the statements of the Council and the resolutions it has adopted, the Middle East situation has yet to improve. In addition, the Council still faces the question of how to deal with the Afghan situation: how to help the Afghan Interim Authority to improve the situation throughout its territory and to create favourable conditions for rebuilding the country. In short, how to fulfil, in a timely manner, the responsibility entrusted to it by the Charter, and how to play its role when problems arise that threaten international peace and security, is still a great challenge for the Council, which still faces many obstacles and real problems. That is a question that deserves our continued reflection and exploration.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): First of all, I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for arranging today's public meeting of the Council on the annual report to the General Assembly. Like others, I should also like to pay warm tribute to Ambassador Mahbubani, to Minister Lee and to everyone else in the Singapore Mission for the commitment in preparing this report, largely in response — as Ambassador Mahbubani said — to the comments of Member States in the general debate with regard to making it shorter, more analytical and more reflective. Singapore has been a good friend of the important process of making the Council's work more transparent, more open and more reflective. With this report, we have taken an important step in that direction, which we very much appreciate.

I want to make a few general points, some of which reflect comments already made, on the work of the Council and on how the Council operates, as well as on some specific issues on the Council's agenda, as dealt with in the report for the past year.

The Security Council is, of course, at the very centre of the multilateral system and of international cooperation. It enjoys unique legitimacy and authority in international law. It deals with a wide canvas of issues; the monthly agenda — as has been said — can often be fairly stretched. Inevitably, the tyranny of time pressures and events does not always allow for the reflection we would want to give to linkages between issues, to thematic focus and to operational coherence in what we do. The test, as Ambassador Greenstock and others have pointed out, is not necessarily the number of meetings we have, but the progress we make in advancing the Council's objectives — especially where it matters, which is the task of safeguarding and advancing peace and preventing conflicts.

The fundamental point that we must always get right, as Ambassador Strømmen pointed out, is to address the mandate given to us, which essentially is that the Council has the primary — not sole, but primary — responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Ambassador Mahbubani made the point that in some ways, the Council may be one of the more conservative institutions in the world. But in safeguarding its Charter responsibility and mandate, the Council is surely right to be conservative. And, while accepting the concept of British pragmatism, it is also important, as one British philosopher said, that we not let too much daylight into what at times must be a very complex set of negotiations and assessments among all Council members.

There is always an intersection between the world of power and capitals and the instruments of multilateral decision-making and responsibilities. That is as it should be. The Council has 15 members, each bringing to the table its own judgements and perspectives. But in its work, what unites the Council and is its central theme — which Ireland has certainly found impressive during our period on the Council — is the sense of Council members that they are also servants of an ideal that, as Ambassador Levitte said, retains its importance, even after nearly 60 years. The cooperation among nations in safeguarding the peace, preventing wars, reacting to crisis and rebuilding after conflicts is indispensable to maintaining and advancing international peace.

Isaiah Berlin titled one of his books "The Crooked Timber of Humanity", and that is a fundamental point. Life and politics are untidy; many of the crises that the Council deals with are both complex and difficult. They can be a cauldron of forces; spirits summoned from the deep when conflicts start are not easily put back into the deep. So the world that the Council deals with in the issues on its agenda

are inherently untidy in many respects. They are extremely complex, and there is rarely a straight line from A to Z. So the Council must, using its best judgement, take due stock of the situation, advance its goals and give proper monitoring to that.

In terms of Council procedures, I should like to make a few general observations. I think it is important that the Council, while recognizing the interlinkages between issues, not encroach on other United Nations bodies or on their roles. That is a theme that has emerged in the general debates on the Council report over the past several years. The United Nations machinery across the range of institutions and committees must be respected, and at times there is a sense that the Council, while rightly debating and assessing thematic issues, needs to be careful that the standing of other United Nations bodies is not diminished and that their prerogatives are fully respected.

At the intergovernmental level, it is clear that we need to talk more to one another, as was pointed out in last year's debate in the General Assembly. The United Nations family of institutions also need to talk more to one another about what is done in the Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the funds and programmes, and so on.

We also need more follow-up of Council decisions and implementation of Council resolutions. In my delegation's view, we should consider establishing more Council committees. In the ad hoc Working Group on Africa, chaired by Ambassador Koonjul, we have a good example of a committee that has done excellent work. It would be a valuable innovation to look at whether committees in other areas considering particular thematic or geographical issues could perhaps follow up on them. That is certainly an innovation that we would see as worth considering.

With regard to Council missions, we think they are a very valuable instrument. There was the mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea, led by Ambassador Kolby, and the mission to the Great Lakes, chaired by Ambassador Levitte. We would be open to and see merit in smaller missions. But there will always be a tension as to the numbers — how representative a smaller group would be. So we would see value in the idea of, perhaps, one, three or four Council members going on a particular mission. It would also, I think, logistically make it more possible to use this instrument more regularly and in a more valuable way.

On the question of themes and of wrap-up debates, we think that they are a very worthwhile innovation in the Council's work over the recent period. The wrap-up debate does not have to be held every month, but we certainly favour the concept, as during the Singapore presidency, of its being open to non-Council members to speak — perhaps, as we agreed, with a limitation for everyone, including Council members, of three minutes each. But we thought it worked extremely well, and we would like to see this continued.

The eleventh of September, of course, overshadowed the Council's work during the year. We can take pride in the fact that the Council acted resolutely and decisively. Resolution 1373 (2001) provides a very valuable scaffolding across the board in the fight against terrorism. The Counter-Terrorism Committee works extremely well, and I join others in paying tribute to Ambassador Greenstock for his work in explaining and outlining goals and objectives to the wider United Nations membership and to the international community. It has worked extremely well in a very sensitive area, and I think that much of that is due to the openness that has been adopted.

On Afghanistan, there has been important progress, with the Bonn agreements and the work of Mr. Brahimi and of the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), and the role of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). What is now important is to stand by the people of Afghanistan in the reconstruction process, so that the opportunity that is there for the people of Afghanistan after many years of great suffering is fully seized.

This is not just a narrow point of emphasis. The international community must be seen to be effective in its engagement with Afghanistan, and over the coming period it will be important, therefore, for the Council to maintain that level of engagement.

On the Middle East, in terms of the Council's work, we have made considerable progress over the year, with resolution 1397 (2002), adopted in March, affirming the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, existing side by side within secure and recognized borders. We know where we need to go. What is now important is to redouble the efforts to get there.

We appreciate the fact that there is now a monthly briefing of the Council on the Middle East. This has been a very valuable and important contribution to the work of the Council on the Middle East.

On Africa, it is clear that if the phrase "We are a community", as has been said, has any meaning, it has to find an expression in Africa. The Ad Hoc Group on Africa has got off to a very good start. We have had a serious level of engagement with issues related to the Great Lakes, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Sierra Leone, the Mano River Union region, Burundi, Somalia and Angola.

The central point here is that with the African Union and the development of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), there is now a real prospect for advancing the interests of Africa and supporting Africa. But this will require, as President Mbeki and others said, an enormous level of engagement by the international community in supporting the efforts of Africa. This is something to which the Council will need to pay due attention and give much commitment in the period ahead.

Finally, let me thank the Secretariat, since this is an appropriate moment to do so, for all of its commitment to and support for the work of the Council during the year, which my delegation much appreciated.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I agree with Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock's statement that this has been ar extraordinary year for the Security Council. There are still a few months remaining, however, during which we may confront the most important events in the life of our Council. Consequently, the submission of this report to the General Assembly is taking place in circumstances in which the Council is now more than ever before under intense scrutiny by the international community and closely watched by Members of the United Nations and international public opinion.

Accordingly, we are pleased that this report is the outcome of agreement in the Council to improve its presentation and that it includes, for the first time, an analytical section that focuses on areas of Council activity that are of interest to the entire membership of the United Nations.

We echo the congratulations and support expressed by some members of the Council to Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani, Minister Lee and their team for their contribution, which has given us this useful tool, which enables us more accurately to report on the activities of the Council in the course of the current year in its work of maintaining international peace and security.

Intensive deliberations led to the adoption of the criteria for the preparation of this report. My delegation participated actively, sharing the vision and approach of Ambassador Mahbubani and his desire to produce a substantive document that would truly be useful to the community of nations.

We congratulate Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock for the contribution he made to the preparation of the introduction, which was the subject of a lively discussion among the membership and which appears in this report; it is, in fact, the most important innovation in the report. As Ambassador Levitte — who himself was a very important supporter of this initiative — said, the Council moves forward slowly. This certainly represents a victory. But discussions are ongoing, and agreement has not yet been reached among all members of the Council. Some members remain reluctant to move forward along the path that was set out in the process of preparing the report.

Today we can consider that slow movement forward as a victory; however, more victories must be achieved. My delegation is pleased, but not yet satisfied, with what has been achieved. Mexico hopes that future developments, particularly in terms of the analytical section, could include, among other innovations, the adoption of clear and precise indicators to measure progress in the Council's work, as well as a section containing proposals to improve the working procedures and performance of our Organization.

Mexico has followed with great interest the work in the Council as well as the efforts made to turn it into a body that has closer ties to the rest of the membership of the United Nations. We know that, as an elected member, we are in the Council only for a short period of time. For this reason, and for other key reasons, we want to make a particular and extraordinary effort, in the same spirit as Ambassador Mahbubani, to ensure that, when we leave the Security Council, we will have contributed to bringing it much closer to the rest of the United Nations community; that its working procedures will be far more transparent; and that progress will

have been made towards the establishmeat of mechanisms aimed at creating linkages among the decisions taken in the Security Council and those of other United Nations bodies.

In that connection, we believe that monthly wrap-up meetings provide an excellent opportunity for an interactive discussion among members and non-members. We will continue to support this becoming a regular practice. However, there are still members with reservations that must be carefully and respectfully considered, so that agreements can be reached in the near future.

Measures have been adopted to improve the working procedures in the Security Council as a whole. Some of these are very simple, such as assigning seats to non-members in our discussions. Others are of greater importance, such as the publication of the Secretary-General's reports and the agenda, and the very important contribution of the fact sheets on items before the Council.

Given our awareness of what has taken place, we want to thank the members of the Security Council secretariat, whose openness to the measures discussed and proposed here with a view to gradually making the Security Council far more transparent and more closely connected to the rest of the Organization. They have remained receptive to these ideas and they have facilitated implementation of the measures we have adopted. They have also been responsive with regard to the issuance of documents.

We have also worked to strengthen the work of the Secretariat in connection with the new work of the Council, such as the field missions of the entire Security Council as a whole and of the sanctions committees, in which my country has actively participated.

We welcome the increasing trend of the Security Council to hold more meetings open to participation or attendance by all Members of the United Nations. We reiterate that we must implement the provisions of rule 48 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, which stipulates the practice of holding open public meetings. We hope that the resistance to change of some Council members will diminish, and that there will be closer links between the members of the Security Council and those of the General Assembly.

We shall continue to work within the informal working group to achieve those ends. Similarly, the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform is another area where we are working to institutionalize our working procedures and rules of procedure, which paradoxically have remained provisional for more than 50 years.

Mexico's commitment to the principle of transparency is unswerving. We want to do away with the barriers to a more substantive report that reflects the daily work of the Council. We hope that this endeavour will succeed. It is one to which my delegation and others are committed.

Mr. Traoré (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): First of all, allow me to thank Assistant Secretary-General Kalomoh for his presentation. I would also like to thank Ambassador Mahbubani for the efforts made by his team with a view to improving the working methods of the Council, as well as for his complete and extremely relevant statement.

My delegation welcomes the convening of today's meeting devoted to a preliminary consideration of the draft report of the Security Council to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. This welcome initiative is in the context of the Council's determination to reform its working methods and contribute further to strengthening its role in maintaining international peace and security.

The draft report before us today is a reflection of our common will to take stock of our activities for the period of 16 June 2001 to 31 July 2002, and to draw lessons from it with a view to improving our future work. My delegation believes first of all that, from the standpoint both of presentation and of content, the draft report is a clear improvement. Indeed, instead of a simple compilation or quantitative description of our activities, we have this time come up with the outline of a document which is more analytical and which takes into account the basic criticism that has been levelled many times at us by Member States. The draft report has also become more concise, avoiding overlapping and repetition with respect to items already dealt with by other United Nations bodies.

With regard to items on the agenda of the Council, it would seem that the introductory part of the draft report is not simply a narrative but rather a lucid and forward-looking analysis. The draft report also deals with general issues, such as our campaign against

terrorism, sanctions regimes and thematic items that are just as important.

During the period under review, it is undeniable that the Council, thanks to the contribution of all its members, has made considerable progress in improving its working methods. It has also broadened the scope of its activities by making fundamental changes in the way it communicates with other Members States and civil-society organizations. This was reflected, inter alia, by the more frequent holding of public meetings and of Arria-formula meetings, along with monthly wrap-up sessions, which have enabled us to begin a dialogue with a view to greater transparency and broader openness.

We cannot fail to mention the missions dispatched by the Council to conflict zones in Africa; these have turned out to be most useful. Moreover, we welcome the regular reports on the activities of the Council's working groups and sanctions committees. We should also point out the increased consultations between Council members and troop-contributing countries in evaluating peacekeeping operations. This allows for greater interaction, thereby avoiding decisions that could harm the proper conduct of such operations.

But this significant progress should not make us lose sight of the efforts we ought to make to achieve our goals. We must, in that regard, strengthen and improve our action with a view to meeting the requirements linked to our basic duty to maintain international peace and security. Among those goals, we attach particular importance to greater openness with other Member States, better coordination with the various actors in the United Nations system and in other institutions, and to fine-tuning our working methods in order to make our work more effective and efficient.

Finally, my delegation thinks that the Council should consider the most appropriate ways of ensuring the effective and full implementation of the many resolutions, decisions and recommendations we take together. We are convinced that, far from being utopian, these objectives are indeed achievable if we show more commitment, more determination and collective will.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, we wish to thank you for convening this meeting, which shows that the Council is giving additional importance to its annual report to the General Assembly. We are pleased that the efforts by Council members to improve the format of the report and to make it more valuable will be met by a favourable response from all United Nations Members in the General Assembly.

Syria supports the format and substance of this report. We thank Mr. Kalomoh and all members of his Secretariat team for their efforts in preparing this report. The positive spirit in which Council members have examined the importance of introducing changes in the format and its analytical introduction reflect the interest in achieving optimum benefit from the report. But no one can talk about the report's new format or the relevant resolutions that the Council has adopted in this regard without paying tribute to the immense efforts made by Ambassador Mahbubani and members of his delegation, especially Ms. Christine Lee. They assisted with and insisted on a constructive approach and ideas that were met with favourably by Council members and reflected accordingly in this new report.

A number of speakers have spoken on the Council's work in specific areas, such as conflict resolution in Africa, the Middle East, Asia or other regions. There were also some remarks about the Council's missions to a number of conflict areas, and statements in some detail about the importance and perspectives of these missions. Speakers have also referred to the Council's wrap-up sessions over the past few months. In this regard, my delegation is pleased to pay tribute to the efforts by Ambassador Levitte, who introduced an admirable formula under which we would work and which won everyone's praise. My delegation stresses that, in the light of the remarks made by a number of Council members, it is very necessary and appropriate to maintain these wrap-up sessions.

Also, during the period under consideration the Council examined numerous draft resolutions and operational aspects of matters concerning peacekeeping, women and children in violent conflicts, and the question of terrorism. Indeed, the Council has met with great success in dealing with many of these issues and has scored considerable points, especially in the area of fighting terrorism. We join many others in paying tribute to Ambassador Greenstock for his leading role in this regard.

However, we have to state that, during the same period, the Council has failed to follow up and implement some of its resolutions. Many delegations with whom we had discussions in the Council, regarding Africa and other parts of the world, expressed their regret that those resolutions were not implemented. Of course, the subject matter becomes even more sensitive when we reaffirm that the Council's resolutions relate to international peace and security. We think that the lack of follow-up in implementation of these resolutions will have an impact on nations' perception of the Council and on its credibility. We have raised this point time and again in our statements here.

I will not go too far here. I would like to cite one resolution that was adopted a couple of days ago — namely, resolution 1435 (2002). A party directly involved has rejected this resolution and defied it despite the request of all Council members to implement it.

Indeed, the Council has made considerable progress with regard to the implementation of many of its resolutions, in terms of making its work more transparent. It held a record number of meetings compared to past years. More importantly, many of those meetings were open to all United Nations Members so they could express their views and give their own input on the functioning of the Council and issues presented before it. Syria believes that this practice should be maintained, so that the Council will be closer to all issues discussed on the international agenda and to the views of all of the Organization's Members.

Ambassador Mahbubani remarked that, in terms of the Council's work, many aspects have been discussed here to make it more efficient and transparent. However, he also cited several negative points that control our work. We do agree with his analysis of the status of these aspects in the past and of what they would be in the future.

Syria looks forward to more serious work in order to improve the Council's operational methods, in particular the working group on the methods and procedures of the Council. This exercise should be ongoing, because the anticipation of better performance is always in order. The exercise becomes even more relevant when we realize that it has become a pressing demand of all Member States every time the report is discussed in the General Assembly.

Syria looks forward to a serious debate on this draft report in the General Assembly, and we affirm that we will take account of all constructive views that may be made to improve the work of the Council, to make it more responsive to the provisions of the Charter and to the expectations and demands of all United Nations Members.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): My delegation welcomes the holding of today's meeting to discuss the annual report of the Security Council, which will be submitted to the General Assembly in accordance with Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations. We are grateful to Ambassador Mahbubani, the Permanent Representative of Singapore, and to his deputy, Ms. Christine Lee, for their relentless drive in making this year's report the way it is. Ambassador Mahbubani's unyielding determination and his innovative approach based on modern business practices, which some of us might have found a little overbearing, have today lead to a report which the entire membership of the United Nations would be proud of.

The informal working group of the Security Council concerning the Council's documentation and other procedural questions has done excellent work, and we would like to thank the Secretariat and its team for their very good work in the preparation of the report, as well as their invaluable support to the Council.

We also wish to express our warm gratitude to the five elected members who left the Council in December 2001 and who contributed enormously to the Council's work. We wish that they could have been invited to give their views on the report at this meeting today, since they were also involved in the first six months of our reporting period.

Compared to last year's report, the report we have before us today represents a major improvement. It is shorter, reader-friendly, more focussed and more organized. More importantly, it has resulted in substantial savings in publication costs, compared with previous reports.

As for the report itself, let me divide my observations into two parts; first, procedural matters with regard to the works of the Security Council, and

secondly, substantive issues with which the Council has been involved in the year covered by the report.

During the period from July 2001 through June 2002, there was a marked improvement in the working methods of this Council. I will cite a few.

First, there here has been a greater number of public meetings with greater participation of non-Council members, and this has created more openness and transparency in the work of the Council. Secondly, the Council has held a large number of open briefings followed by informal consultations, thus giving non-members the opportunity to be apprised of the latest developments of topics under discussion. Thirdly, there have been several wrap-up sessions, giving members as well as non-members of the Council the opportunity to express their views on topics of interest in a more candid, frank and open manner.

Fourthly, greater interaction has resulted through interventions in Council debates when speakers alternated between members and non-members. Fifthly, the Council has begun a new practice of drawing lots for the speakers list, and this has helped make a fairer and more transparent system for the list.

Sixthly, there has been a series of brainstorming sessions both inside and outside the Security Council. This has helped in preparing comprehensive approaches to many complex and difficult issues. We think that the Council, through very busy with an agenda that is more or less routine, should find more time for informal, candid, free and frank exchanges so it can prepare strategic approaches to various issues confronting us.

The outcome of these procedural innovations has been very positive. We have seen a more vibrant Council with a free flow of ideas and a more interactive and animated exchange of views on many issues. Some cases worth citing are the discussions on Africa held under the presidency of the Minster for Foreign Affairs of Mauritius in January 2002; discussions on the Mano River Union under the presidency of Baroness Amos; discussions on the Democratic Republic of Congo under the presidency of Ambassador Negroponte; and discussions on Angola, Afghanistan, East Timor and many others.

On the substantive issues, the report clearly shows how busy Council was during the period covered. It not only reacted to threats to international and regional peace and security, but was also proactive in dealing with many problems affecting peace and security at both regional and international levels.

The Council energetically reacted to the 11 September attacks and the immediate threats of terror and attacks by adopting resolutions 1363 (2001), 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001). Likewise, the Council has been fully involved in addressing problems in Afghanistan, Kosovo, East Timor, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Angola and Burundi.

In some cases, however, the Council has not been able to deal with certain problems in the same successful manner. On the Middle East, for example, while the Council made a tremendous leap by deciding in January 2002 to have regular monthly briefings, unfortunately it has not been able to make real progress in helping with the peace process.

On the other hand, the implied condoning by the Security Council of non-compliance with its resolutions by some Members prevented the Council from attaining the desired result. Likewise, the Council has not yet been able to reach agreement on the issue of sanctions.

We have witnessed the proactive role of the Council in dealing with African issues. The creation of the ad hoc Working Group on Africa, to which many of our colleagues have referred, and the productive use of retreats have immensely helped in enhancing the role of the Council. I agree with Ambassador Corr that ad hoc working groups on other complex issues can be useful and can contribute to the work of the Council.

Security Council missions to various troubled areas have also been extremely helpful in addressing the core of the problems and in instilling necessary confidence in the work of the Council. We believe that field visits are essential in helping members understand and assess the real situation on the ground. We therefore encourage such visits, which have also had very positive impacts on the local actors involved in conflict situations.

While we acknowledge the efforts of the Council toward achieving the objectives of the United Nations Charter, as well as the strong commitment of the members to its principles, we believe collective interest should not be sacrificed on the altar of national interest. Preserving unity in the Council should be the

guiding mantra, which every Council member must strive to achieve. Without such unity it would be difficult to project a credible and undivided image, which may give a wrong signal to parties concerned.

In most cases the Council has lived up to its standard and has been instrumental in dealing with those problems. This has contributed to the credibility of the Council by making the body more transparent, answerable and accountable.

We hope that this report will be the object of serious discussion and analysis by the wider membership of the United Nations, because we believe that through such discussion we will be able to strengthen the relationship and the confidence between the General Assembly and the Security Council, enhance the credibility of the Council and above all preserve the centrality of the Council.

Mr. Cunningham (United States): Let me begin by saying that I agree with many of my colleagues around the table that this has been a year of considerable success. We have not reached all the goals we set for ourselves, but we have accomplished quite a bit. It has also been a year of considerable improvement in the working methods of the Security Council, demonstrating flexibility and creativity and adapting ourselves to new challenges and circumstances.

We welcome this year's report to the General Assembly on the work of the Council. As others have noted, it is streamlined and has a much better format, and we commend Ambassador Mahbubani and his colleagues for pressing forward and accomplishing this outcome, which we supported.

The report reflects the continuing progress achieved in balancing transparency with the efficient workings of the Council. This has been achieved in different degrees in at least three separate areas: procedures; new mechanisms for work on Africa and for incorporating the work of troop-contributing countries; and the groundbreaking work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and Ambassador Valdivieso's committee.

During our presidency we worked closely with the Singapore delegation to draw up a comprehensive index of all the procedural notes that have been issued on the workings of the Council. This annotated list provides a clear guide to all Member States on a wide range of procedural clarifications. We also appreciate the efforts of Norway, as Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, to establish a new mechanism for enhancing the dialogue between the Council and troop contributors. We have made some progress in addressing areas that were of concern, but we believe that there is room for further improvement. We welcome the views of troop-contributing countries in our deliberations as a contribution to better Council decision-making.

I would note that the traditional complaints about the Council's lack of transparency are quickly being overtaken by events. On the threat of global terrorism, we saw the construction of a transparent body — the Counter-Terrorism Committee — which has erased in many respects the old lines and divisions between the Council and the United Nations membership at large. In resolution 1373 (2001), the Council took a radical approach in reaction to 11 September; it was a sweeping resolution imposing a series of legislative and other obligations on all States. Those ambitious goals can be achieved only with transparent information sharing by Member States and in ongoing dialogue between Member States and the Security Council. The Counter-Terrorism Committee is a good example of a practical, comprehensive and operational method for incorporating all Member States into a process of decision-making and implementation stemming from a Security Council resolution. It is also, I think, a prime example of the Council's flexibility, and creativity and ability to adapt to new circumstances.

That said, we are less interested in reviewing where we have been than in planning for where we are going. We will fully support efforts to improve transparency in the future, while maintaining and improving the Council's effectiveness. We have urgent, important and pressing issues before us: peacekeeping, conflict prevention, fighting terrorism and the unique challenge posed by Iraq.

Our responsibilities as a Council and as members of the Council compel us to continue efforts to be frank and effective. For example, there should be no mincing of words with regard to the threat to peace posed by self-proclaimed terrorists, such as the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade. In the coming days, the Council will be called on to meet the purpose for which it was created, when

it addresses the defiance of Iraq and the threat it poses to international peace and security.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting to consider and adopt the draft report of the Security Council to the General Assembly for the period 16 June 2001 to 31 July 2002.

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the delegation of Singapore, which has worked tirelessly to make the Council's annual report evolve both in format and in content. The General Assembly's debate on the report of the Security Council, and the comments made at that time, are finally before the Council. We owe that to Ambassador Mahbubani, who has used all his skill, experience, wisdom and faith to make it happen. We also owe much to the insight and commitment of his colleagues. My delegation will have the privilege of presenting the report to the General Assembly next month. I can assure Ambassador Mahbubani that at that time considerable reference will be made to this morning's discussion. I believe that, as submitted, the report will finally enable the General Assembly to assume its own responsibilities and play its role pursuant to Article 15 of the Charter.

The current form of the report will enable the General Assembly not simply to discuss it in the course of one morning and to take note of it, but rather truly to study the accomplishments of the Security Council over a given period. Having said that, let me say that, when the report is considered, my delegation will have the opportunity to express its views on the innovations contained in the report.

Like other colleagues, such as Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani, Ambassador Jean-David Levitte and Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, I will quickly turn to the issue of sanctions. We attach great importance to improving the implementation of sanctions and to streamlining the functions of the sanctions committees, which are among our goals. I wish to point out, regretfully, that the draft report does not do justice to the rather difficult work of the Working Group on sanctions. Under my chairmanship, the Working Group has held a series of meetings focused basically on a document entitled "Draft conclusion of the Chairman", of 14 February 2001. That exercise has made it possible to make some progress. Real progress was made on procedural issues and issues relating to humanitarian exemptions. The Working Group has acknowledged the need for the sanctions committees to make their decisions known to the entire United Nations membership, except when this could impede the implementation of sanctions. The main disagreement at this time relates to the duration of sanctions. In that regard, the obstacle relates more to methodology than to philosophy. Some delegations advocate time-bound sanctions, while others support sanctions without a time limit with their lifting depending on the conduct of the targeted State.

The Working Group has finally reached agreement on an improved monitoring system to enhance the effectiveness and viability of sanctions and to limit the undesired effects of sanctions on third States.

I should like to bring to the attention of Council members the progress that has been made by the Working Group on sanctions. It should be understood that there will shortly be a briefing in greater detail in order to gather the views of members of the Council on the best possible way to approach the outstanding issues.

Those are the comments that I wanted to make with respect to our consideration of this report. In concluding, I would like to pay tribute to the Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations, which led the Working Group from 1999 to 2001. They contributed to the progress made in the Working Group during that time.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I speak with great pleasure today, as we consider the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly in its new format. Colombia found it very satisfactory to participate in the initiatives aimed at proposing and reaching agreement on a new format, a process in which the delegation of Singapore played an outstanding role.

This is the appropriate opportunity to present comments so as to contribute to what will be the document considered by the rest of the Member States of the United Nations, to whom we have the obligation of giving an account of our actions. In this spirit, I will offer some reflections.

Does the new report reflect the work of the Security Council? In general, I can affirm that it does. However, the report still portrays the situation in a very

formal manner, with lists of documents, communiqués, resolutions, issues and so on, which take up the greatest part of the body of the report. I recognize that the introduction is a very positive step in the right direction. Here, I should acknowledge that the delegation of the United Kingdom, a permanent member, has shown great support for the process of reforming the working methods of the Council. In future, it will be necessary to intensify those efforts.

What is the usefulness of the report under consideration? The report is a practical reference guide with which the Members of the General Assembly and, in a more global way, the international community can critically observe the Security Council. Here we have a document that even in its size is more attractive, and which gains the necessary attention for the work of this principal organ of the United Nations. Of course, the facts are the main judge of the Council. The threats to international peace and security and the Council's response to them are what enables one to evaluate the performance of the Council. However, the report in its present format gives order to this critical vision, encourages a more informed discussion and exposes members of the Council to a constructive examination by the rest of the United Nations membership.

Has the modification of the report been worthwhile? Yes, definitely. The efforts to improve the report, lasting many months, has proved that it is possible to reform Council practices and customs that had seemed unchangeable. It is a lesson for future generations of Council members, applicable to other practices in the Council's proceedings. It is a lesson to both permanent and elected members of the Council that it is possible to change without creating political situations that are difficult or impossible to control. Finally, it is a lesson for the Secretariat, which early on made public its doubts on the advisability or even the viability of such a Council report.

What is the benefit to the Members of the United Nations? It is difficult to speak of a concrete, tangible benefit that is created by the modified report. However, in general, the new format is a concrete sign of a collective effort towards transparency. It is a clear signal that we want to keep the General Assembly better informed. It is an acknowledgement of the existence of political points of connection between the two bodies. It is a report on the complementarity of the two organs.

Should we understand that the process of reforming the report is now finished? In no way. This report will be submitted for scrutiny by Members of the General Assembly, to which we belong. Based on their comments and suggestions, it might be possible to continue to adjust the content and composition of the report. It is therefore a permanent process of creating a product suited to the demands of the Members of the Organization. It is also an attempt completely in line with the discussions on reforming the United Nations which are taking place based on the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/387) issued earlier this month.

We will also have to reflect on aspects of its content. For example, my delegation is still convinced that the report needs a more detailed section on missions — which in recent years have been extending the presence of the Security Council in the field — including their justification, cost, scope and so on. This issue has sparked great interest beyond the Council, but it is not adequately reflected in the report, as we might have wished.

There are also simple but curious questions, which appear to be the result of a very strict interpretation of the format being used. I am referring, for example, to the section on Nobel Prizes awarded — in chapter 21, perhaps in the second part, on page 285 of the English draft — where it says "Security Council missions or Groups of Experts, none". In other words, this strict format leads to laughable situations, as can easily be seen.

What is the next step? The next step is, of course, to listen attentively to the debate in the General Assembly and to participate very actively in it. That discussion must follow two avenues. One of them is the performance of the Security Council, in other words, the purely political consideration of the action and inaction of the Council. The other avenue of discussion will deal with the characteristics of the report. That discussion will provide the guidelines for our work in coming months.

Having said that, I want to comment on the discussion during this morning's meeting. The comments made seemed very interesting. Because I was absent during the first part of the meeting, I tried to read the text of Ambassador Mahbubani's statement distributed by the delegation of Singapore. This meeting of self-criticism has been very interesting, as

have been the exchanges, which should give rise to new reforms of the Council.

In other words, the Council must do a great deal to create such opportunities, which in truth we have not always sought, to criticise ourselves and improve our work. We should have more such exercises and analyse the substantive parts of our work. Assessing the Council's performance is a very important task that we must continue to perform, as is mentioned in paragraph 16 of Ambassador Mahbubani's written text.

However, I wish to make the point that, as indicated in its agenda, this meeting was convened to consider the draft report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. This meeting should not be made into some kind of wrap-up on the Council's agenda and performance. In other words, we must use this meeting to consider the draft report and convene others to analyse and comment on the Security Council's performance and our assessment of it. That is a separate matter.

Mr. Konuzin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We take a positive view of the draft regular annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. It provides useful and detailed information on the activities of the Council in the course of the year. We thank the Secretariat staff for the high level of its professionalism and for completing its work on schedule. We also thank the delegation of Singapore for its contribution to this work.

We must note the somewhat relentless nature of the Council's work. In the period under consideration, we adopted 73 resolutions and 45 presidential statements. There has been an increase in the number of open meetings and broader use has been made of open briefings. All of this demonstrates the increased transparency of our work.

We believe it important that the report itself clearly reflects the concrete steps taken by the Council to improve its working methods. Also worthy of approval is the fact that the report has become significantly more compact. The principal innovation is the analytical evaluation of the Council's work this year, contained in the report's introductory section. At the same time, we are of the view that the decisions and resolutions of the Security Council speak more objectively for its work.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a few brief comments in my capacity as representative of Bulgaria.

My delegation wishes to begin by thanking the Secretariat for preparing the draft report and the delegation of Singapore for being the moving force behind the improvements that have made it more concise and easier for Members to use. As all have done before me, I thank Ambassador Mahbubani and Minister Lee.

The discussion thus far has been a useful dialogue — or rather, "polylogue" — although, as Ambassador Valdivieso quite rightly said, it has gone in two directions: an analysis of the working methods and procedures of the Council, which is very important, and a discussion of the substance of its work. Since this is the first discussion of its kind, such a dichotomy was perfectly predictable and normal.

I agree with Ambassador Mahbubani that the Council must find a way to meet more often in order to discuss its strategy. The annual retreat organized by the Secretary-General is not enough. That is clear, additional proof of which is provided by this debate. Moreover, I would like in passing to express my support for Ambassador's Levitte innovative idea that the written texts distributed at the outset of a meeting be made part of the official record and that delegations extrapolate in their statements on the basis of these texts. That could only increase and enhance the interactive nature of our discussions.

I must say that one of the first observations to be made on the annual report indubitably is that the workload of the Council has enormously increased. That is due simply to the impact of globalization, as was quite rightly pointed out by Ambassador Greenstock. Globalization requires the Council to do better and to do more. These two somewhat contradictory necessities have caused the time we spend in deliberations to grow exponentially, often testing our physical limits, in order to allow the Council better to communicate with the rest of the United Nations membership and, beyond that, with the other actors in international relations. This is a genuine problem that we have to face. Indeed, on reading the report, I note that what is missing is an account of the relations which the Council and the United Nations in general increasingly and appropriately enjoy with non-State and non-governmental entities. With the advent

of globalization, the role of such actors has become increasingly important and we must take note of it.

There is work to be done in that direction. I know that this is an extremely sensitive subject, but it is a problem facing the entire United Nations system. I believe that the Council has work to do in that regard. Ambassador Levitte talked in this context about the Arias formula meetings. That is a useful format, but, first, it is not used regularly and, secondly, it is insufficient.

A second point I wish to raise in the context of the partnership of the Council with various actors is the importance of partnership not only with Member States, but also with regional organizations. From that standpoint, I believe that the case of the Western Balkans is very revealing. The Council has established an extremely successful and useful partnership with regional organizations, including the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which are ready to assume their responsibilities. In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, this is an extremely successful partnership, in that the Council provides a legal and political framework for the activities of those regional organizations, whose work on the ground is strictly determined by Security Council resolutions.

Africa is another such example. Much of the Council's time — perhaps 60 to 75 per cent — is rightly devoted to the various conflicts in Africa. We should note that the weakness of local African partners means that the Council has to work harder, and I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the creation of the African Union. It is very important for that new regional African organization to become a much more effective partner for the Council in managing various African crises that has been the case in the past.

While on the subject of Africa, I would like to say a few words about Somalia. Here, I agree fully with the comments of Ambassador Strømmen of Norway. The Bulgarian Chairman of the Sanctions Committee on Somalia has taken the necessary steps to revive that dormant Committee. The implementation of sanctions and the arms embargo are only one part of the overall strategy that the Council must draw up with regard to that country, which has been neglected for too long.

I should like in conclusion to refer to the role played by individuals. Ambassador Greenstock mentioned this matter, and I must say that two examples come to mind. The first is the decisive practical role played by Ambassador Levitte in the various Council missions to the Great Lakes region. His energy and determination have counted for a great deal. If we can see some light at the end of the tunnel with regard to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it is due to some extent to his determination. The other example, to which many have referred, is the work done by Ambassador Greenstock at the head of the Committee established under resolution 1373 (2001), which is a model of transparency. I fully agree with all the speakers who have preceded me: the example set by the United Kingdom delegation and its Ambassador is truly one for the Council to follow in its dialogue with Member States.

Two conclusions can be drawn from the Report. The Council has been effective every time it has been united. Members of the Council are aware that the Bulgarian delegation has working tirelessly for such unity, since without unity it is very difficult to preserve the essential and central role of the Council in international relations. Those two aspects — unity and centrality — are obviously mutually enforcing, as can be clearly seen from the report.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

May I take it that the draft report, as corrected, is adopted by the Council?

There being no objection, it is so decided.

This decision will be reflected in a note by the President of the Security Council to be issued as document S/2002/1068.

The Security Council has thus concluded its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.